

# **POLICE-FAITH RELATIONS: PERCEPTIONS, EXPERIENCES AND CHALLENGES**

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# **Police-Faith Relations: Perceptions, Experiences and Challenges**

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## **Abstract**

The changing landscape of police-faith relations in the UK presents challenges to policing policy and practice relating to issues of prejudice, hate crime, extremism and terrorism. Academic attention in this area has largely focussed on Muslim and Jewish communities in the context of hate crime and terrorism, yet increasing diversity and community hostility to 'difference' requires a broader lens through which to assess police-faith relations. This case study draws on qualitative interviews with police officers and staff, self-identified 'faith community leaders' and community members across Baha'i, Christian, Hindu, Jewish, Muslim, Quaker and Sikh faiths.

The findings demonstrate a prevailing perception of the police as 'uncultured', fuelled by limited engagement with faith communities and the framing of police-faith relations as an issue of diversity associated with risk. This issue is exacerbated by systemic dominant cultures in policing which value 'catching criminals' and devalue the 'soft' skills and roles associated with building relationships across diverse groups. The 'cultural work' of the police in the recognition of some social identities and groups over others is shown to impact upon perceptions of procedural justice and legitimacy in policing across faith groups. The findings highlight limitations in leadership and strategy to develop police-community relationships, which specifically impacts upon faith groups at the periphery of police awareness and protection. This study shows that interrelated issues of police cultures, prejudice and faith hate crime are evident in a county where 'diversity' is less visible and argues for faith to become more explicit in assessments of police legitimacy beyond large, multicultural cities.

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**This thesis is dedicated to my Dad,  
who knew I would undertake a PhD before I did.**

**Robert Knight  
(1953-2006)**

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# Chapter One

## Introduction

Recent anti-diversity and anti-immigration discourse in the UK has been connected in public and political discourse to 'Brexit', the UK referendum on membership of the European Union, international religious extremism, terrorism, conflict and the Syrian refugee crisis. This context brings attention to issues of multiculturalism, integration, prejudice and hate crime, within which police-community relationships, citizenship and a sense of 'belonging' play a significant role (Antrobus *et al*, 2015; Bradford, 2014; Millings, 2013). Academic attention to police-community relations in this context has contributed to understanding hate crime, exploring the impact of policing approaches on specific groups and examining the relationship between perceptions of fairness and legitimacy in policing. Much of this work focusses on ethnicity or specifically Muslim and Jewish communities through the lens of extremism, terrorism and hate crime victimisation. Complex issues of increasing diversity in the UK (ONS, 2016), declining religiosity (Park *et al.*, 2012) and increasing secularism are fuelling debates about the participation of faith groups in civic and public life (MacFayden and Prideaux, 2014; Calhoun *et al.*, 2011). This challenges the interlocked history of Christianity and British culture and raises questions about how the state progresses towards recognising the ever-changing diverse social and cultural context of communities in the UK. Beyond the specific assessment of targeted victimisation, faith in identity is likely to impact on perceptions and experiences of policing, particularly in relation to recognition and participation, yet limited research has examined police-faith relations.

Described as 'over-policed and under-protected' (Chakraborti and Garland, 2009) the treatment of Muslim communities in recent years is a clear example of the power and influence of policing policy and practice in the homogenisation and securitisation of specific identities and communities (Millings, 2013; Husband and Alam, 2011; Pantazis and Pemberton, 2009; McGhee, 2008). This 'cultural work' of the police (Fraser, 2000) impacts



on wider public perceptions of identities, groups and communities, and can fuel bias and prejudice by facilitating an enabling environment for hate crime (Perry, 2001). It is unclear how this policing approach towards the Muslim community, in addition to a wider context where anti-diversity sentiments are connected with sites of authority, has impacted on other faith groups perceptions and experiences of policing. Academic thinking and theory development in this field proposes the consideration of the 'procedural justice' model of policing in seeking to understand community perceptions of policing, particularly in relation to measurements of confidence and legitimacy (Jackson *et al.*, 2013; Hough *et al.*, 2013; Roberts and Herrington, 2013).

'Procedural justice' suggests that achieving perceptions of equality, fairness, respect and transparency in policing will lead to increased willingness to participate in policing and justice processes and to obey the law (Jackson *et al.*, 2013; Brunsen and Stewart; 2006; Kane, 2005; Tyler and Huo, 2002). There is a significant amount of literature which supports this theory, although the delivery of procedural justice in practice is problematic. Community policing is widely viewed as the panacea to building effective police-community relations (Reiner, 2010) yet community policing has significantly reduced following austerity measures in recent years (HMIC, 2013; IPCC, 2013). Police officer numbers have reduced by nearly 20,000 since 2010 (Allen and Dempsey, 2016) and there is widespread disinvestment in PCSOs (Cosgrove and Ramshaw, 2015; Millie, 2013). However, the financial challenges facing policing are not the only barrier to building effective police-community relations. Systemic issues in the institutional cultures in policing have been shown to label community engagement work as 'soft and fluffy' and 'not real policing' (Cosgrove and Ramshaw, 2015; O'Neill, 2015; McLaughlin, 2007). The skills and approaches required to build relationships and perceptions of procedural justice and legitimacy across diverse communities are therefore not recognised or valued as part of the dominant police culture (Corsianos, 2011).

This has significant implications for police-faith relations in particular, where some groups may already occupy positions at the margins of society and receive little police protection or support. Described as 'post-Brexit' hostility by the media and reflective of the anti-immigration discourse of the 'Leave' campaign (BBC News, 2016; Guardian, 2016a, Independent, 2016), a 41% increase in religiously and racially motivated hate crime was reported comparing July 2016 to July 2015 alone (Corcoran and Smith, 2016). The growth of the UK Independence Party and the English Defence League in recent years have also facilitated public displays which actively promote less diversity and less openness to difference. The demonstrations by the English Defence League between 2010 and 2012 and the riots in London and other major cities in 2011 have been linked to interrelated issues of community division, marginalisation and disadvantage (Giannasi, 2015; Sing *et al.*, 2012). This context appears to have encouraged bias and prejudice to bubble to the surface, seeing year on year increases in religiously and racially motivated hate crime since 2012 (Corcoran and Smith, 2016). The Chief Constable of Police Scotland announced in October 2016 that 90 dedicated police officers would deal with hate crime in order to give it the priority status it deserves in a context of divided communities (BBC News, 2016). In contrast, the police force in the case study area for this research opted for a model of 'omni-competence', delivering training around cultural diversity, vulnerability and victimisation across all police officers and staff. These opposing models are considered in this thesis, recognising the role of the current context and cultural barriers in shifting policing towards greater recognition of faith and diversity.

Studies examining issues of diversity in police-community relations tend to focus on multicultural cities and ethnicity, which leaves gaps in understanding police-faith relations in 'everyday' towns and places where policing approaches may be experientially different. Recognition of faith hate crime in particular is likely to be higher in multicultural areas where reports to police are more frequent compared to 'everyday' places with limited cultural diversity and lower levels of crime in general. Examining police policy and practice through a case study of a county in the Midlands, this study draws on the perspectives and

experiences of police officers and faith communities to develop insight into their relations. The interplay between the central themes of identity and intersectionality in perceptions of procedural justice and legitimacy is explored across the seven faith groups that participated in this research. Undertaking this research in an 'everyday' place moves beyond the study of diversity in multicultural cities, to explore police-faith relations in a context where the impact of the social, cultural and political issues outlined above is less explicit.

Chapter Two begins the review of literature by considering developments in theory relevant to the study of police-faith relations. In particular, thinking and understanding around concepts of identity, intersectionality and 'difference' in groups and communities are explored in relation to perceptions and experiences of bias, prejudice and 'Othering'. The chapter introduces the 'procedural justice model' of policing, which connects perceptions of fairness, neutrality and respect to legitimacy in policing. Faith is identified as an important aspect of identity, which despite perceptions of declining religiosity in the UK, continues to play a significant role for some identities, groups and communities. Identification with a faith inevitably draws lines of distinction between individuals and groups, contributing to 'in-group' and 'out-group' status and recognition. The role of policing in the recognition and misrecognition of faith in communities is considered in relation to experiences of marginalisation and disengagement from equal participation in policing. Developments in thinking about police 'cultures' are discussed, recognising systemic issues and barriers to the progression of procedural justice and legitimacy in policing. Finally, this chapter explores these areas of theory in relation to policy development which impact upon the experiences of faith communities, particularly those relating to concepts of equality and diversity in policing.

Chapter Three builds on this discussion of theory and explores developments in policing policy and practice which have implications for police-faith relations in the UK. The chapter begins by considering the policing of neighbourhoods and communities, identifying

challenges to the 'community policing' model in a context of austerity. Cultural barriers to effective police-faith relations are explored and the dominance in police practice to consider faith in the context of risk and discrimination is identified as a significant limitation. The focus moves on to examine the implications of counter-terrorism policy and practice. Recognising the tendency for research in this field to focus on impact for the Muslim community, this chapter seeks to address the implications for perceptions of procedural justice and legitimacy across wider police-faith relations. The role of national multiculturalism policy is then considered in relation to its impact on police policy and practice. The ability for some groups to participate in society with greater recognition, influence and opportunities, plays a role in the challenges of achieving solidarity and reducing tension and difference between diverse groups. The 'cultural work' of policing in the identification and treatment of specific identities and groups is considered a factor in police-faith relations, particularly in relation to policing practice which serves to marginalise, disengage or disenfranchise some identities over others.

Chapter Four focusses on the policing of faith hate crime, recognising the impact of victimisation on the individuals and communities affected, and more broadly on community relationships and perceptions of policing. The broader issues and concepts relating to police-faith relations considered in this thesis are shown to be magnified and exacerbated in the context of faith hate victimisation. In particular, the relationship between engagement with policing, perceptions of procedural justice and legitimacy are evident in some of the challenges policing faces in increasing reporting of victimisation and participation in justice processes. Police culture is raised again as a significant barrier to effective communication and engagement with diverse faith groups, involving complex issues of austerity and a lack of visible leadership and strategy to tackle faith hate crime.

Chapter Five describes the qualitative research design and methods used in this study, which draws on an interpretivist epistemological approach to gathering data and generating insight into police-faith relations. The chapter examines the ethical

considerations and practical challenges of conducting qualitative research. The chapter goes on to consider the status of the researcher as 'insider' or 'outsider' to those participating, bringing conceptions of identity and intersectionality into qualitative research considerations. The use of grounded theory is explained, highlighting the value of using this approach to analysis in understanding the social processes and social construction of police-faith relations.

Chapter Six is the first of the findings chapters, detailing the findings from interviews with police officers across four overarching themes. Firstly, policing is still not 'doing difference' and the prevailing culture within policing remains resistant to diversity and change. Secondly, policing is increasingly valuing enforcement over engagement activity which renders community relationships a lower priority for already stretched resources. Thirdly, the disproportionate policing of faith communities threatens perceptions of procedural justice and equality in police-faith relationships. Finally, legitimacy continues to be perceived as an important founding principle and value in policing, but is challenged by both policy and cultural issues, which is particularly impactful on police-faith relations in a context of increasing diversity in communities.

Chapter Seven is the second of the findings chapters, examining the perceptions and experiences of faith communities. Four key themes emerged: firstly, perceptions of policing as 'uncultured' are explored, fuelled by poor representation of diverse communities in policing and limited knowledge about faith. Secondly, a sense of 'us and them' between policing and faith communities is examined, exploring the role of bridge-builders such as community engagement officers and community leaders in developing relationships with faith communities. Thirdly, expectations of policing are considered in relation to vulnerability and victimisation of faith communities, addressing in particular the differences between relationships at micro and macro levels. Finally, this chapter raises the potential for greater co-production between the police and faith communities, recognising shared

values and opportunities for contribution to public safety which may play a role in strengthening police-faith relations.

The final chapter brings together the perspectives of those in policing and faith communities and situates the findings in the current context, exploring implications for academia, policy and practice. This chapter is structured into three main challenges for policing: challenging perceptions of the police as 'uncultured'; redefining the 'cultural work' of the police; and embedding leadership and strategy in the development of relationships between policing and faith communities. The chapter provides a conclusion to this thesis and a collation of next steps, presenting a way forward which addresses the challenges identified in the improvement of police-faith relations. The findings contribute to understanding police-faith relations and demonstrate that issues of police cultures, prejudice and faith hate crime are evident in small towns and counties where 'diversity' is less visible. This research provides new findings to support the concept of the 'cultural work' of the police, identifying the impact of police policy and practice on faith communities' perceptions and experiences of exclusion, disengagement and marginalisation. The study builds on the theory of procedural justice and legitimacy in policing, highlighting the need to bring assessments of police cultures together with procedural justice to consider the holistic factors at play in police-community relations.

## **Chapter Two**

### **Policing and Faith Communities: *In Theory***

#### **Introduction**

Extensive research has been undertaken measuring the impact of various factors on public perceptions of policing, confidence in policing and willingness to engage in justice processes. The assessment of faith within these variables has largely been undertaken through the lens of radicalisation, extremism, terrorism and faith hate victimisation. Looking across academia, policy and practice in policing, there appears to have been a lack of attention paid to faith in communities, perhaps as a result of growing secularism, declining religiosity in the UK and perceptions that ‘communities’ are diminishing. However, drawing on theories of identity, collectivities and intersectionality, this chapter argues that faith, and faith communities, form an important part of the British public and the specificity of perceptions and experiences of policing are important to the legitimacy of policing. Theories behind processes of establishing difference and constructing and reconstructing identities and communities provide perspectives through which to critique the role of policing in these processes. A growing body of research supports the theory that public perceptions of legitimacy and ‘procedural justice’ in policing leads to increased confidence in policing (Antrobus *et al.*, 2015). This chapter explores these theories in relation to policy development which impacts upon faith communities’ experiences of policing, particularly those relating to ‘equality’ and ‘diversity’. By connecting theory relating to identity, communities, intersectionality and police-community relations, this Chapter seeks to build understanding about the factors at play in police-faith relations.

#### **Faith in Identity**

‘Faith and religiosity remain elusive objects of study for the social sciences’ (Silvestri, 2011:1230). The results of social attitudes and citizenship surveys tend to be the measures

used to understand trends in religiosity in Britain and how this has changed over time. However, they provide little insight into why changes can be seen or what this means for individuals, communities and society more generally. The national census and British Social Attitudes survey highlight the importance of accurately measuring religiosity in order to guide the allocation of time and resource placed in the faith sector and to influence specific policy issues (Park *et al.*, 2012:174). Whilst both data sources are relatively dated now, the information about prevalence of religion in Britain and the role it plays in the lives and choices of British people provide useful insight. There is wide agreement across the social sciences that late modernity, fluid modernity and postmodernity have had an impact on identity, the growth of individualisation and the decline of religiosity in Britain (Beck, 1992; Lyon, 1999; Young, 1999; Bauman, 2000, 2004; Bruce, 2002, Spalek 2008, Voas and Ling, 2010). This argument suggests that the social and economic transformations in Western society over the last fifty years have eroded traditional affiliations based on family or social class, such as cultural behaviours, religion and faith, instead harbouring self-independence and the prevalence of personal over communal aims. Whilst the results discussed below demonstrate changes in cultural behaviours and religious practice, faith and religiosity remain significant and important aspects of British culture and social make up. Particularly in light of the increasingly diverse make-up of 21<sup>st</sup> century Britain and the prominence of faith as a defining characteristic within many new and emerging communities (ONS, 2016; Park *et al.*, 2012).

The 28<sup>th</sup> British Social Attitudes Survey (2012) attempts to understand what religiosity means by addressing affiliation, religion in upbringing and practice. The proportion of respondents identifying themselves as belonging to a religion fell from 69% in 1983 when the survey began, to 52% in 2012 (Park *et al.* 2012:173). There is no evidence of a 'lifecycle effect' to explain this decline; as people grow older they tend not to change or become more or less religious (Park *et al.* 2012). There is also not enough information to test the relationship between religiosity and trends or events in public life in Britain or further afield. The analysis does however support the 'generational replacement' theory which suggests



that religion is ‘dying out’ as more babies are born to non-religious parents and are unlikely to become religious later in life (Park *et al.*, 2012).

Whilst data across surveys shows a decline in religiosity in Britain over the past few decades, survey results differ in presenting proportions of people currently affiliated to a religion. For example, the last Home Office Citizenship Survey (Department for Communities and Local Government, 2011:19-13) shows a significantly higher proportion of the population as affiliated to a religion, 79%, compared to 50% found in the British Social Attitudes Survey (see Table 1).

Table 1. Home Office Citizenship Survey 2011

<i>Faith</i>	<i>% England and Wales Population      % ‘actively practising’</i>	
Buddhist	<1	59
Christian	70	33
Hindu	2	70
Muslim	4	79
Sikh	1	74
Other (inc. Jewish)	2	57
Total:	79	Average: 62

The differences in the results between the two surveys are likely to be caused by the methodology and questionnaire design. However, a significant proportion of the British public continue to identify with a religion. Also shown in Table 1, the majority of those who identify with a religion, with the exception of Christians, also actively practice and are likely to attend religious services. Compared to 2005 there has been little change in the proportion of each religion actively practising, except for those identifying with the Muslim faith, which rose from 73% to 79% (Department for Communities and Local Government,

2011:19-13). Religion and religious activity therefore remain important and visible aspects of British society.

Roy (2004) undertook specific work to understand the role of religion in the lives of young Muslims living in the West. Supporting the above arguments, he found that young Muslims are much less likely than their parents or previous generations to 'believe' in Islam or to participate in religious activities. Roy attributed those changes to increasing individualisation and the move to pursue personal over communal aims. Modood (2010:11) argues that calling this 'individualisation' is misleading as it could be considered to be a result of 'privatisation' or 'secularisation' in some contexts. He states 'these identities are not private' because increased personal and associational agency in choosing such identities means they become public identities which have consequences (Modood, 2010:11). Those consequences vary significantly, depending predominantly on the social, political and cultural environment in which they exist. In this sense, a true picture of religiosity in Britain may never be known, as some will not achieve the confidence or willingness to report such an identifier.

Lambert's (2008) research into the Islamist and Salafi communities in London suggests that there are a growing number of individuals who have forsaken their parents' established allegiances and adopted a hybrid identity where 'Muslim' denotes cultural rather than practicing religious identity. Similar shifts away from strict religious observance have been noted in immigrant London Christian and London Jewish communities in the past. In this current case, many young Muslims have the added incentive of wishing to reduce their vulnerability to Islamophobic prejudice by emphasising their willingness to adopt recognisable secular lifestyles (Lambert, 2008). The British Social Attitudes survey found that 46% of people thought that there was more religious prejudice today than there was five years ago, although this does represent a significant drop from 62% in 2008 (2012:27). The findings in 2008 are likely to reflect the well-publicised rise in bias, prejudice and Islamophobic hate crime following the terrorist attacks of 9/11 in New York, 2001, and 7/7

in London, 2005. International incidents of Islamic extremism have occurred in the years since then, although these may not have been as impactful on public perceptions in the UK. Further research is required to build on this information, addressing perceptions of religious prejudice and faith hate crime across faith communities and to contribute qualitative understanding of the factors which impact upon perceptions of prejudice. This is discussed further in Chapter Four.

The citizenship survey adds value in terms of drawing patterns of religious affiliation with ethnicity, demonstrating higher religiosity amongst black and Asian people compared to white people (Department for Communities and Local Government, 2011). These binary categories reflect limitations in the information and analysis available in relation to how faith intersects with other aspects of identity. However, the survey findings show that three quarters of white people stated they were affiliated to a religion, Christianity, compared to 98% of Asian people and 89% of black people. More respondents stated that religion was important to their self identity (20%) than ethnicity/cultural background (13%) or skin colour (11%). These findings support the concept of 'self-conscious identities', which recognise that people are active in their identity formation, shifting from singular cultural, ethnic and collective identities to an understanding that people focus on important aspects of their identity where and when they choose to (Hall, 1992).

Faith plays a significant role in the lives of many individuals and communities across Britain and whether they perceive their faith to be a public or a private matter, it is likely to have an impact on aspects of their relationships with their peers, community, public services and with society in general. Crime surveys and attitude surveys provide a broad overview of religiosity and relationships to factors around identity, attitudes and life choices. However, these types of studies provide little meaningful insight into the role of faith in identity in relation to how this may define or contribute to relationships with policing. Further from this, it is important to understand how relationships may change in relation to broader policing contexts, political agendas and local and national threats to specific faith groups.

## Faith in Communities

*Religion has an organic quality, a communal and moral dimension that binds people to one another and creates close dependencies between them and their environments... Religions become embodied as moral communities – as networks of deeply felt obligation to one another and to collective rituals and beliefs, all of which provide a sense of belonging, even security, to the participants.* (Wuthnow, 1988:308)

Religion is deeply public in character (Jawad, 2007:20) and the work of faith groups and communities to aid others, provide welfare and support at local, national and international levels is widely seen. The previous section talks about the prevalence of religiosity in Britain and across the two main surveys somewhere between 50% and 70% affiliate themselves with a religion and the majority practice through attendance at services and faith meetings. Research also shows that minority ethnic groups tend to locate themselves relatively close together in cities and towns, creating areas where certain cultures and faiths dominate. The prevalence of faith communities across Britain is visible and the growth of faith forums, interfaith networks and groups and large scale events can be seen both at the local and national level. The arguments around declining religiosity, growing secularism and increased individualisation are also used to explain changes in the nature and prevalence of communities.

Bauman (2000) suggests that in late modernity communities are becoming increasingly short-lived and fragile, so that any sense of belonging that individuals experience is likely to be transitory and fleeting, and any attachments formed to a community are likely to be easily discarded (Bauman, 2004). This argument appears to align more easily with communities of geography, neighbours, families and schools for example. Where the practice of faith exists, research suggests that the sense of community and belonging remain (Birdwell, 2013). The social aspects of religion can bring people into contact,

encouraging cooperation and a sense of connectedness, which in communal settings reflects a sense of social capital (McAndrew 2010). There have also been suggestions that religion provides a 'psychic insurance' which renders people more willing to take risks with other people and trust that they will reciprocate behaviours (Kirkpatrick, 2005; Scheve and Stasavage, 2006). Beyond references to faith in particular, many studies in recent years document the decline of the traditional community and highlight civic engagement and 'generalised social trust' as contemporary indicators of 'social capital' (Putnam, 2000). This term refers to social networks, bonds and trust that may be beneficial in promoting cooperation, helping people to achieve goals and are considered to be the basic pre-requisites of democracy (Coleman, 1988; Putnam, 1993). The role of 'community' and 'social capital' in relationships with policing is unclear (Jackson and Wade, 2005), particularly in relation to faith. The role of community or civic engagement will be different for individuals and may be different across faith groups, but may be important to creating structures through which police relationships, communication and engagement are built or maintained.

Research conducted by Kelly (2001) which looked at Bosnian refugees in the UK found that they had developed 'communities' not based on shared values or common histories, but in order to achieve recognition from the state and to increase their chances of receiving aid and resources. This example appears to fit with sociology's paradigm 'the market model of religion', which suggests religious affiliation can be a 'rational choice effort to obtain the most personal benefits at the lowest cost' (Johnson, 2003:325). The debate about the market model links to discussion around 'community' moving away from an organic concept and becoming an increasingly political term, used to aid policy development through the categorisation of individuals. These perceptions have been reinforced in more recent literature surrounding 'politicised identities' and notions of 'community' having become a 'governmentalised discourse for the purposes of policy development' (Delanty, 2003:87). However, rather than raising awareness of different faith groups, for example, this risks missing the distinct experiences of individuals and communities who may hold

specific, or indeed multiple, identities (Spalek, 2008). Spalek suggests that there is increasing awareness among policy makers and researchers that the voices of specific identities and communities are obscured or diluted by the collective majority and that this shift 'reflects the emergence of new social groupings' (2008:37). Those identities which may experience the negative bias of such labelling processes may also struggle to have their voices heard, due to occupying 'disempowered positions' at the margins of society. It has been argued, particularly from feminist viewpoints, that the perspectives of such identities may appear less rational than those produced by and shared through sites that can be linked to locations of power (Fricker, 2000). This is particularly prevalent in discussion about faith in Britain, where the history of British culture, the state, the welfare, health and education systems, have been interlocked with Christianity, meaning those with a Christian identity might be afforded opportunities to participate and share their views in ways inaccessible to other faiths.

Everyday discourse, policy analysis, political theory and writings in the social sciences routinely use 'groupist' terms, particularly around ethnicity, race and faith and often frame accounts of conflict in groupist language (Brubaker, 2003). Engaging in the identification of individuals and collectivities through the use of everyday discourses and practices, social theory argues, helps us to define who we are, by identifying the 'Self' and the 'Other' as collectivities (Wood and Landry, 2008:15). As Jenkins describes, 'defining 'us' involves defining a range of 'thems' also...which logically means that *inclusion* entails *exclusion*, if only by default' (2008:102 original italics). The process of establishing 'difference' through stereotyping and prejudgements carries negative connotations, although it is when this process moves from identifying difference to ascribing value that discrimination and prejudice can develop. Social psychologists have been particularly interested in what group membership does to behaviour, which has been very useful in the analysis of crime and criminality, perhaps most populist around gangs and gang culture. Tajfel (1981) states that group membership, even if it is only arbitrary assignation to a group under laboratory conditions, is sufficient to generate in-group favouritism and discrimination against out-

group members. This is an important concept in how group identification is recycled; receiving treatment biased by identity fuels resentment of the 'Other', biasing treatment towards the 'Other' and fuelling resentment in return. Where this exists at state level, around issues such as social welfare, housing and employment, the police are one, very visible, representation of the state through which to enact aspects of that in-group/out-group behaviour.

Challenges to theories relating to in-group/out-group status arise when the lines between groups become blurry. Most academics agree that people are 'situated in particular webs of belonging'; that shared faith and other forms of solidarity provide networks of mutual support and frameworks of meaning which facilitate communication and culture (Brubaker, 2003:556-557).

*...to conceptualise ethnicity, race and nation as substances or things, or entities or organisms or collective individuals – as the imagery of discrete, concrete, tangible, bounded and enduring 'groups' encourages us to do – is not to adopt an analytical idiom of individual choice, but rather...to think in relational, processual, and dynamic terms. This means thinking of ethnicity, race, and nation not in terms of substantial groups or entities, but in terms of practical categories, cultural idioms, cognitive schemas, discursive frames, organisational routines, institutional forms, political projects and contingent events.*

(Brubaker, 2003:555)

This model for thinking provides flexibility in our understanding of individuals and groups, taking as a basic analytical category not the 'group' as an entity, but 'groupness' as 'a contextually fluctuating conceptual variable' (Brubaker, 2003:555). Accepting that the political, social, cultural and psychological contexts for individuals and groups changes over time, geography and circumstance, provides a framework for thinking about police-faith relations in a more sophisticated and realistic way. Reflecting this approach, concepts of

‘intersectionality’ and ‘relationality’ seek to unravel multiple identities and the interlocking power structures which shape them. Reflecting on Roy’s (2004) work described above, this concept could be used to analyse the variety of identities those participants hold, taking into account all dimensions of power and addressing how each singular identity intersects with each other and its wider context: young, male, Muslim, living in the West. The consequences of those multiple identities on those individuals’ experiences and perceptions of the political, economic, cultural and social spheres in which they live are likely to be significant. In Husband and Alam’s (2011) research into Muslim communities in West Yorkshire, in relation to counter terrorism work, they describe ‘questions of voice, legitimacy and power haunt the evidence presented...as individuals switch the group identity through which they filter this experience, then so too their perception of the priorities and constraints of their world are likely to shift’ (2011:204).

Academic research and theory in relation to intersectionality is rapidly developing to enable the consideration of a variety of ‘identifiers’ or ‘categories’ in experience. Winker and Degele (2011:54) suggest that ‘because of ongoing processes of individualisation, it clearly makes no sense to limit the categories...an intersectionality-based approach has to always keep open the number of socially defined categories available and necessary’. This approach provides opportunity for more comprehensive analysis of experience and perceptions. However, Ludvig (2006:246) in her intersectional analysis of the biographical narrative of a female migrant in Vienna, describes intersectionality as an approach to empirical analysis as weak, suggesting that deciphering the cause of discrimination between for example gender or foreign accent, becomes subjective. Despite this risk of subjectivity, the intersectionality approach provides an opportunity to consider and understand identity constructions, experiences, perceptions and social processes in a way which reflects the complexity of social life. In considering the relationship between faith communities and an institution such as policing, issues of geography, social status and mobility, historical relationships and individual experience of crime, for example, can play a significant role.



Further from this, not only is it important to consider the intersectionality of multiple identities, it is also vital to understand *perceived* identities and their impact, for example stereotypes of identity and presumptions of religion based on ethnicity. The experience of targeted hate crime due to incorrect perceptions of religious affiliation is likely to have a different impact on victims who not identify with the label prescribed to them. The consequences of faith in identity, both identified by the self and perceived by others, has made a significant contribution to worldwide history of human conflict.

*What it was to be Jewish in Germany in the late 1930s was utterly different, for example, from what it was to be Jewish in Israel in 2007. Nominally the same, virtually different. Same name, different identity?* (Jenkins, 2008:109)

In recent years academics have directed increased attention to the consequences of discrimination and prejudice against individuals, groups and communities on the basis of religion. The term ‘faith hate’ has evolved alongside broader hate crime literature, exploring the sentiments, behaviour and violence targeted towards specific faith groups. Almost entirely the literature focuses on Muslims and concepts of Islamophobia and the history and prevalence of anti-Semitism. The literature base around these issues and concepts will be explored in detail in Chapter Four.

It is within this context that actors who perceive themselves to be in devalued positions can begin building ‘trenches of resistance’ on the basis of difference (Castells, 2004:8) which can ultimately lead to the formation and expression of ‘resistant identities’ (Spalek, 2008:12). This is particularly prevalent in Hoggatt’s (1992) study of Tower Hamlets, which notes that tensions between communities corresponds with a period of sustained uncertainty for groups and individuals where the collective identity is challenged and undermined. The resentment between the white and Bangladeshi communities was made poignant by the fact that ‘the latter community had respect for tradition, male superiority, a capacity for entrepreneurship and social advancement – which the white working class

had lost' (Hoggatt, 1992:354). This example underlines the importance of 'social advancement' and the resentment that can occur between collectivities from perceptions of advantage or disadvantage. Husband and Allam (2011) found, in their research into young Muslim males, that where different communities experience themselves as objectively disadvantaged, this perception provides a foundation for strong senses of symbolic and realistic threat. There are many examples of the outcomes of the cross-over of resistant identities and perceived threat. The civil disturbances in Birmingham in 2005, involving Pakistani and Bangladeshi youths, illustrate this type of conflict (Loftman and Middleton, 2009).

The connections between stereotyping, resources, social advancement and resentment are also evident in research conducted by Clarke, Gilmour and Garner (2007) around the perceptions and experiences of, and attitudes towards, 'community' in Britain. The need to experience the reality of 'community' physically through such concrete manifestations as local institutions, schools, churches and youth clubs was found to be significant to community members, who suggested that extreme resentment resulted when such institutions were threatened or removed (2007:91). Husband and Allam (2011) note from their research that knowledge of communities' boundaries, socially and territorially, is fundamental to be able to anticipate and intervene in intergroup tension. They stated that this was as much about community divides between white communities as between white communities and minority ethnic communities (Husband and Allam, 2011:173). The role of physical spaces and places of worship as sites for police engagement with faith communities is another area of police-faith relations which is under-researched. The reliance on visible locations which bring community members together is critiqued due to the potential to miss less visible groups and to homogenise those using shared spaces (Spalek, 2008). However, the visible engagement between policing and faith groups in such locations has been explored only from the perspective of reviewing the impact of counter-terrorism policing approaches affecting Muslim communities. Further research is needed to build

understanding of the relationship and impact of police engagement in Sikh temples or Baha'i group meetings in individuals' homes, for example.

The ever-changing, diverse social and cultural context of communities in the UK means that understandings of identity, intersectionality and in-group/out-group behaviours and experiences are quickly out of touch with contemporary issues. The role of policing in recycling group identification and the development of 'trenches of resistance' is largely unknown beyond Muslim communities, which again, continues to change. How faith communities more broadly perceive themselves and others to be grouped by authorities and to receive differing types of police engagement, support or investigation is also under-researched across political, social, cultural and psychological dimensions, all of which play a significant role in experiences of crime and policing. The work that has been undertaken to understand the equality of policing across identities and communities has largely focussed on race or more broadly addresses public trust and confidence in policing. Perceptions of legitimacy in policing are entwined with issues of neutrality and fairness across individuals and groups and processes of decision-making.

### **Legitimacy and Procedural Justice**

The police are the most visible aspect of state control and authority, granted powers to enforce the law in a model which seeks public consent for policing. Gau and Brunson (2015) argue that undertaking this role requires not only the legal right to exercise power but the moral authority too, in order to maximise people obeying the law voluntarily. There is significant academic support for the theory that achieving perceptions of legitimacy in policing will provide the moral authority required to deliver regulation with the support of the public (Jackson *et al.*, 2013; Brunson and Stewart; 2006; Kane, 2005; Tyler and Huo, 2002; Sampson and Bartusch, 1998; Weber, 1978). Research into police legitimacy tends to evidence or support one of two patterns of thinking; firstly that legitimacy in policing enables self-regulation in communities due to its impact on social control, compliance,

willingness to obey the law and to cooperate with the police (Hough *et al.*, 2013; Roberts and Herrington, 2013; Warner, 2007; Sunshine and Tyler, 2003; Carr, 2003; Vélez, 2001); and secondly that the absence of legitimacy in policing fuels deviance and personal 'righting wrongs' including self-protection and violence (Haas *et al.*, 2014; Jackson *et al.*, 2013; Stewart and Simons, 2010; Tankebe, 2009; Kubrin and Weitzer, 2003).

Much research supports the theory that rather than the outcomes of police or justice activity, perceptions of policing processes as fair, respectful and trustworthy are the most important factors in perceptions of legitimacy. Known as 'procedural justice' or the 'process-based model of policing', research shows that when people are treated fairly, with dignity and respect, perceive decision-making to be transparent and just and feel their voice is heard, they are more likely to obey the law and trust the police (Murphy *et al.*, 2008; Tyler, 2008; Reisig *et al.*, 2007; Tyler, 2003). Research evidencing the impact of the procedural justice approach demonstrates that small changes to officer behaviour and language can increase civilians' sense of having been treated with respect and dignity (Mazerolle *et al.*, 2013; Mazerolle *et al.*, 2012). For groups who may feel targeted by the police, neutrality can be the most important factor in shaping perceptions of legitimacy in policing, which can be managed through treatment with respect and dignity (Huq *et al.*, 2011; Beetham, 1991).

Perceptions of procedural justice and legitimacy in policing amongst faith groups has received limited specific academic attention, beyond assessments of the impact of counter-terrorism policing policies and approaches towards Muslim communities. The relationship between legitimacy and equality in policing became a serious consideration in academic and political discourse in the 1980s, following race-related riots in Brixton (Walklate, 2000). This very visible display of community unrest 'where the police effectively battled the black community' (Pickering *et al.* 2009:165) led to suggestions that the police had 'lost touch' with local communities and that racism in policing was a significant factor in this (Scarman, 1981). Relationships between the police and black and minority ethnic communities were

scrutinised and trust, fairness and equality became key areas of focus under the recommendations for improvement. Studies of legitimacy, procedural justice and public confidence in policing have tended to focus on race, particularly in relation to social deprivation and crime rates in specific communities, as a result of the Scarman Report in 1981 and fuelled again by the Macpherson Report in 1999 regarding the murder of Stephen Lawrence.

The 9/11 and 7/7 terrorist attacks in the US and the UK dictated a sea-change in considerations of police-faith relations, shifting attention from race to faith. Political, policing and media attention centred debate on Islamic faith and culture and how they differ from 'mainstream' ideologies (Chakraborti, 2000). The lives of Muslim communities in the UK, and elsewhere, have been seriously impacted upon, targeted and victimised through religiously and racially motivated prejudice (Millings, 2013). The impact of this context on Muslim communities has been studied widely and will be discussed in detail in the next chapter. The development of equality and diversity policy in light of this needed to be two-fold: protecting Muslim communities in the UK from hate crime and protecting all UK citizens from the threat of terror associated with extremists of the Islamic faith (Chakraborti, 2007). However, the CONTEST counter-terrorism strategy swiftly followed and all police forces were given new levels of responsibility to gather information and evidence to prevent 'home-grown' terrorists (HM Government, 2006). Unsurprisingly, this resulted in significant changes to police relationships with Muslim communities, breeding distrust on both sides and police actions effectively homogenising Muslims as a 'suspect community', impacting severely on broader community cohesion and hate crime (McGhee, 2010).

The limitations of the CONTEST strategy to account for, and manage, the negative impact on specific communities and individuals mirrors the mistakes in targeted policing approaches outlined in the Scarman (1981) and Macpherson (1999) reports. Such blanket policy development ignored the importance of legitimacy in policing and directly affected

the factors most closely linked with perceptions of procedural justice; fairness, respect, dignity, neutrality and transparency. The long-standing impact of the inquiry into the murder of Stephen Lawrence in 1993, Reiner (2010) argues, was not the brutality of the murder, the incompetence and failures of the police, the racism that the inquiry uncovered, but that Stephen Lawrence himself was 'the ideal-typical pure victim, a person of impeccable character suffering an entirely unprovoked attack' (2010:251). It is this fact that created fear in black and minority ethnic communities that the police and justice system may fail to protect, support or seek justice for victims due to bias or prejudice. Parallels between this focus on race, fairness and legitimacy can be seen in the impact of the targeted nature of policing radicalisation and extremism in relation to Muslim communities. Whilst much research demonstrates the impact of policing approaches on Muslims perceptions of policing (Millings, 2013; Tyler *et al.*, 2010; Pantazis and Pemberton, 2009; Spalek and McDonald, 2009; Klausen, 2009) limited work has looked through a wider lens, addressing perceptions of fairness, neutrality and respect across different faiths. With such attention focussed on Muslim communities, as was the case for black communities, the perceptions and experiences of policing across other faith groups are rendered invisible, across academia, policy and practice. However, where faith is an important aspect of an individual's identity, this review of theory in the field suggests there is potential for a wide 'faith collective' to view policing as 'them' or 'Other'.

## **Conclusion**

Faith continues to be important in the identity of individuals and communities in the UK and is likely to shape perceptions and experiences of policing and community relationships. Theory demonstrates the potential impact of identification with in-group or out-group statuses and positions of disempowerment in relationships across groups and communities. Perceptions of the police as a homogenous group presents risk in terms of building relationships across groups, particularly where police activity has contributed to the labelling of faith groups as 'in' or 'out'. More than thirty-five years have passed since

policing began to seriously reflect on legitimacy, procedural justice and issues of equality and yet it is suggested that very little genuine reform has been achieved (Rowe, 2007). The police 'culture', the lack of management and leadership of change, the challenges of training operational, tactical staff in theory and concepts of diversity linger as explanations for the lack of progress made (Rowe, 2008; Rowe, 2007; Holdaway and O'Neill, 2006; Rowe and Garland, 2003). Beyond the research evidence for procedural justice in achieving perceptions of legitimacy, policing practice points to community policing, community engagement and 'co-production' of public safety as mechanisms to address these issues. Chapter Three builds on this discussion of theory and explores developments in policing policy and practice which have implications for police-faith relations in the UK.

## **Chapter Three**

### **Policing and Faith Communities: *In Practice***

#### **Introduction**

Theories of identity, groups and intersectionality were discussed in Chapter Two in relation to understanding the role of faith in identity and the impact of identity on perceptions and experiences of policing. The role of procedural justice and legitimacy were explored as key factors in the development and maintenance of positive police-community relations and issues related to faith, equality and diversity were raised. This chapter builds on these theoretical underpinnings of the study of the relationship between policing and faith communities, bringing in developments in policy and practice which are shown to impact on these relationships. Three areas of policy and practice are explored in relation to their implications for police-faith relations in the UK; policing neighbourhoods and communities, policing terrorism and policing multiculturalism. The challenges of community policing as a tool to build relationships with faith communities are considered in the context of policing practice which culturally devalues engagement with communities. The vast majority of existing literature addressing police-faith relations does so through the lens of extremism and terrorism; this chapter examines the implications of counter-terrorism policy and practice for wider faith groups and community relationships. Finally, the broader context in which police-faith relations exist is explored, identifying the role of national multiculturalism policy in defining policing approaches to division or tension between and within communities.

#### **Policing Neighbourhoods and Communities**

Cultivating public cooperation with the police and facilitating a flow of information and communication was central to the Peelian model of policing and is a fundamental line of enquiry in the study of police-faith relations. The deep and wide hostility to the creation of



the new police in 1829 meant that specific measures were developed to achieve consensual policing (Reiner, 2010). Developments in policing approaches over the years have been necessary to maintain public support through periods of social and economic change (Brogden and Nijhar, 2005; Savage, 2007). In particular, the disadvantage, deprivation and marginalisation of minority groups, predominantly black and minority ethnic groups and immigrants, which led to rioting and significant community tensions in the 1980s and 1990s (Favell, 2001, Scarman, 1981). 'Community policing' is considered to be one of the major developments to encourage public cooperation with policing, largely adopted in an attempt to prevent further community unrest following the riots in the UK in the 1980s (Reiner, 2010). Definitions of 'community policing' include partnerships between policing and communities (Renauer, 2007; Skogan, 2005), problem-solving approaches (Leigh *et al.*, 1998), organisational decentralisation (Skogan and Hartnett, 2005; Oliver, 1998) and 'co-production' or shared responsibility for public safety (Jones and Newburn, 2002). In practice, community policing draws on various aspects of these approaches and is designed to be flexible to community needs and priorities. By the late 1980s community policing had become the new post-Scarmanist orthodoxy of nearly all chief officers, recognising its potential to garner public cooperation across diverse groups (Reiner, 1991). However, whilst the senior ranks supported community policing initiatives, a level of protest occurred 'on the ground' where operational ranks were more committed to 'catching criminals' and 'real policing' (McLaughlin, 2007:96-97, 182-7).

The dominant culture in policing is argued to minimise the role of community policing by placing value on the 'real policing' tactics of concentrating on prolific offenders, geographic hotspots for crime and zero tolerance approaches (Campeau, 2015; Loftus, 2010; Reiner, 2010). Short-term crime reduction targets are also common-place in policing in the UK and are essentially at odds with community policing, which is a process responsive to community demands and emphasises commitment to helping communities and neighbourhoods solve crime problems themselves (Sherman, 1997). Effective community policing requires the decentralisation of direction, 'discouraging the automatic application

of central-office policies' (Skogan and Hartnett, 2005:429) to facilitate the development of local solutions. Reiner (2010) argues that community policing has 'flourished in uneasy tension with other new policing strategies of a tougher kind, and indeed community policing is increasingly interpreted as a crime control strategy' and therefore implemented incorrectly (Reiner, 2010:140).

The role of secularism in central policing policy has also been argued to skew policing approaches to ignore the needs of diverse faith groups and to use universally-applicable engagement tactics in line with 'equality and diversity' policy (Lambert, 2008). Awareness of faith in identity and in communities is argued to be confined to issues of 'diversity' in engaging with, or gleaning intelligence from, communities (McFayden and Prideaux, 2014). The 'diversity agenda' in policing tends to link diversity to risk, which can intensify the experience of otherness, difference and unfamiliarity, impacting negatively on officer engagement with issues of diversity (McFayden and Prideaux, 2014; Loftus, 2008). The emergence of 'identity politics' and the 'new politics of diversity', following the riots of the 1980s and increasing diversity in the UK since, has generated conflict for traditional police cultures, limiting the extent to which officers can explicitly express their personal cultural values (Loftus, 2009:35). Cockcroft (2013:102) argues that the language of diversity has become 'tokenistic and politically correct' and has done little to alter the opinions and values of police officers. Engagement with faith communities appears to be considered an issue of 'diversity' in policing, rendering it complex, 'risky' and undesirable police work (Rowe and Garland, 2013).

In addition to these cultural issues, police officer numbers have reduced by nearly 20,000 since 2010 (Allen and Dempsey, 2016) and therefore 'austerity measures' have been linked directly to the significant reduction in community policing in recent years (HMIC, 2013; IPCC, 2013). Studies evidence the changing role of the Police Community Support Officer (PCSO) away from community engagement and towards crime control (Cosgrove and Ramshaw, 2015; Millie, 2013). The PCSO role was designed to provide visible policing and

reassurance to communities, to build perceptions of legitimacy in policing and to facilitate social capital amongst communities (O'Neill, 2014). However, the number of PCSOs in policing has reduced and the amount of time they spend engaging with communities has also diminished, redirecting PCSOs to support police officers with enforcement duties (Cosgrove, 2015; Cosgrove and Ramshaw, 2015; O'Neill, 2014; Millie, 2013; Merritt, 2010). Developments in technology in policing have also reduced community engagement, particularly the increase in police patrol in cars, fewer officers 'on the beat' and minimal face-to-face contact in police stations (Cordner, 2014). This detachment from communities has a disproportionately negative impact on black and minority ethnic communities, where direct engagement with policing is likely to be negative (Barrett *et al.*, 2014; Jackson *et al.*, 2012; Kalra, 2003). Police engagement with faith groups is likely to focus on places of worship, such as temples or churches, due to their focus on geographic spatial communities and hotspots (Loftus, 2010) which suggests that relationships with faith groups may also be impacted by reductions in foot patrol. This may also play a role in the low reporting of faith hate crime and incidents to the police, which is often caused by disengagement and distrust in the police or perceptions that nothing will be done (discussed in detail in Chapter Four; Chakraborti, 2015; Hall, 2013; Christmann and Wong, 2010).

The political and ideological example of a 'proper democratic relationship' between the police, local authority and community is to 'reflect community priorities, be they crime or safety issues' (Tilley, 2004:165). The Crime and Disorder Act 1998 intended to bring together police forces, local authorities and third sector organisations to deliver crime prevention and community safety in partnership. This approach is principally aligned with community policing, focussing on understanding the various factors related to crime, including sociodemographics, deprivation, community relationships and the people and places most likely to be at risk of crime and victimisation. However, research suggests that the multiagency partnerships this legislation was designed to create have adversely impacted on community participation in policing by relying on self-appointed representatives (Van de Broek, 2002). Brogden and Nijhar (2005) argue that this approach

does little to tackle the historical disenfranchisement and marginalisation of disengaged groups. Reliance on those with the loudest voices and the sense of agency and social capital which allows them to be heard is arguably a cause of marginalisation and disengagement. This drawback of community policing is significant in failings to hear the voices of 'hidden' groups and communities (Perry, 2015; Chakraborti, 2015; Spalek, 2008; Garland *et al.*, 2006).

Detachment and alienation between police and communities are described as factors in all major community unrest and riots in the UK. The riots of the 1980s were described in the previous chapter as the ramifications of poor police relations with black communities (Scarman, 1981). More recently the riots in London in 2011, following the fatal shooting of Mark Duggan by police officers, are also considered an example of poor police-community relations (Sing *et al.*, 2012). A small march in protest of his death escalated into violence against the police, arson and looting in twenty-two London boroughs and sixty-six local authority areas nationally (Bell *et al.*, 2014). 5,112 crimes were committed over four days, the majority of which were burglaries, but a significant number of violent incidents occurred, including five fatalities (Home Office, 2011). The most widely held view of the causes of the riots were that young people, particularly those of black and Asian backgrounds, have little respect for the police, perceive police stop-and-search activities to be biased and feel discontent with the state more broadly (Sing *et al.*, 2012). These conclusions reflect the theoretical standpoint in the previous chapter, pointing to the need for perceptions of procedural justice and fairness in policing to build legitimacy, relationships and cooperation (Hough *et al.*, 2013; Roberts and Herrington, 2013; Warner, 2007; Sunshine and Tyler, 2003). However, this work continues to focus on ethnicity in identity, which means the impact for faith groups remains largely under-researched.

Klockars (1985) argues that genuine communities either do not exist or are very rare, especially in urban areas and those that do exist are probably 'self-policing' (Klockars, 2005:450). He argues that the concept of community policing puts the responsibility of

creating 'communities' on the police, needing to bring groups into being to give them an institutional or organisational reality to the police. Despite this view of communities, research demonstrates that minority ethnic groups are increasingly living closer together, resulting in specific cultural integration which excludes the white population (Kaufman, 2013). This suggests that integration, in this sense, between faith groups predominantly associated with black and Asian ethnicities will be higher than those related to white groups. These findings have implications for policing, particularly in relation to the procedural justice model of policing discussed in the previous chapter, which evidences the need for perceptions of fairness in treatment across groups to achieve support for policing (Hough *et al.*, 2013). Beyond Islam in recent years, faith within neighbourhoods is rarely acknowledged as a factor or as an important aspect of identity in the study of police-community relations. However, if community policing is experienced differently between groups based on geographical community policing, this is likely to impact on those faith groups which tend to live close together or congregate in shared spaces.

Another level of complexity to policing faith communities in the UK is generated by international incidents and conflict, where events linked to Hezbollah or the militant Shi'a Islamist group for example, bring attention to terrorist ideologies, raise issues of racially and religiously aggravated crime, faith hate, cultural differences and police prejudice. The ramifications of international events and terrorist activity have impacted on communities in cities and small towns throughout the UK, in the form of fear, hostility, backlash attacks and victimisation (Kellinger and Paterson, 2007; Husband and Alam, 2011). Community policing teams can be best-placed to provide reassurance to communities affected by international events, but they are often ill-equipped to do so due to perceptions that this is the role of 'specialists' in hate crime, 'diversity' or community engagement (McFayden and Prideaux, 2014; Hall, 2013; Hall, 2005). The impact of international events on faith communities and their relationships with their surrounding communities and the police are under-researched beyond specific work addressing Islamic extremism, anti-Semitism and Sectarianism (discussed in detail in Chapter Four). Studies examining these issues also tend

not to look beyond large, multicultural cities such as London, Manchester and Birmingham. However, it is recognised that experience of prejudice, targeted victimisation or hate crime is particularly impactful in rural areas where lack of provision of support services are available and victims may not be identified as 'deserving' due to their minority status (Williams and Tregidga, 2014; Chakraborti, 2012; Garland and Chakraborti, 2002).

Policing at the neighbourhood and community level is fundamental to democratic policing through developing relationships between policing and communities, building perceptions of fairness and legitimacy. The core opportunities to develop perceptions of procedural justice, legitimacy and confidence across faith groups is through the conduct of frontline police officers (Roberts and Herrington, 2013). This presents significant opportunities and risks in the development of police-faith relations, where presently many frontline officers perceive engagement with diverse faith groups to be underpinned by issues of diversity (McFayden and Prideaux, 2010). Limitations in the resourcing of community policing, alongside a lack of enthusiasm for the 'soft' side of engaging with communities (Rowe and Garland, 2013; Corsianos, 2011) is also problematic for the improvement of police-faith relations. Where community policing fails to maintain fairness and equality in its approach to communities, significant ramifications in community unrest and tension can result. One of the most visible and widely critiqued areas of policing in relation to fairness and targeting specific identities and communities is counter-terrorism. The links between community policing and counter-terrorism create significant risks for the maintenance of legitimacy and robust relationships with communities and this is a specific issue which resonates with faith-relations.

### **Policing Terrorism**

Terrorist activity is generally linked to political motivation, although extreme-right violence, hate crimes and mass murder perpetrated by members of religious cults are forms of terrorism with motivation that is different from traditional criminal violence (Kelly and

Maghan, 1998). In order to develop understanding and build information about these types of risks, counter-terrorism work links closely to community intelligence, involving non-specialist police officers, neighbourhood and community support officers. This creates significant risks, given the discussion in the previous section, to maintaining public trust, confidence and cooperation with policing, by breaching an implicit demarcation line between covert specialism and mainstream policing (Innes, 2006). Research into the policing of the Provisional IRA community support activity highlighted the failure of UK counter-terrorism approaches to adequately distinguish terrorists from the Republican Catholic communities where they sought support (Lambert, 2008). The treatment of Irish Catholics as a 'suspect community' is perceived to be the cause for the stereotyping, profiling and stigmatisation they experienced during the thirty years of political and community conflict in Northern Ireland (Hillyard, 2006). This failing has arguably been replicated in the approach to tackling Islamic extremism, causing significant consequences for Muslim communities, particularly in relation to prejudice, victimisation and the strength of relationships between policing and communities more broadly (Husband and Alam, 2011; Spalek, 2011; Pantazis and Pemberton, 2009; McGhee, 2008). The link between counter-terrorism policing and community policing is problematic for both policing and communities. This section seeks to address these issues in relation to their impact on police-faith relations more broadly.

The government's counter terrorism strategy, CONTEST, rapidly published following the London 2005 bombings, comprised of four elements; prevention and pursuit to reduce the threat from terrorism, and protection and preparation to reduce the UK's vulnerability to attack (Home Office, 2006). The 'Prevent' aspect of the strategy is of central concern here, which called for the 'identification of vulnerable communities' aimed at diverting individuals away from potential radicalisation and extremism (Home Office, 2006). Due to the focus of the strategy being Islamic extremism, this 'identification' required the explicit targeting of Muslim communities. The impact of this approach is well-documented through academic study of the aftermath of the terrorist attacks in London and the implementation

of the CONTEST strategy. Studies evidence the homogenising of Muslims into a 'suspect community' (Pantazis and Pemberton, 2009; McGhee, 2008) increased incidents of prejudice, bias and hate crime against those perceived to be associated with Islam (Copsey *et al.*, 2013; Lambert and Githens-Mazer, 2010; Hopkins, 2007; Iganksi, 2008) and the disengagement of some Muslims from policing and civic society (Mythen *et al.*, 2009).

The problematic nature of this policy was recognised by the government and a consultation review was undertaken, resulting in the publication of CONTEST II in 2009 (HM Government, 2009). The new policy recognised that Prevent was the least developed strand and had seriously impacted on relations with Muslim communities and caused concerns to local authorities in implementing prevention work. CONTEST II brought together concepts of community cohesion, race equality and Prevent activity, arguing that extremists are less likely to find support in cohesive communities and cohesive communities will be more resilient to isolate extremism (HM Government, 2009:84). Husband and Alam's (2011) research in West Yorkshire addressed the implementation of the Prevent policy in five metropolitan authorities. They found that the strong negative reaction of Muslim communities to funding from Prevent significantly hindered local authorities' abilities to deliver the required outcomes. The willingness of Muslim organisations to participate in Prevent funding 'may itself have become a criterion for distinguishing between 'good' and 'bad' Muslim organisations, thus becoming a self-fuelling cycle' (Husband and Alam, 2011:197). These issues were referenced in the publication of the third counter terrorism strategy, CONTEST III published in 2011, which states:

*Prevent depends on a successful integration strategy, which establishes a stronger sense of common ground and shared values, which enables participation and the empowerment of all communities and which also provides social mobility. But integration alone will not deliver Prevent objectives. And Prevent must not – as it has in the past – assume control of funding for integration projects which have a purpose and value far wider than*



*security and counter-terrorism. The Government will not securitise its integration work: that would be neither effective, proportionate nor necessary.*

(HM Government, 2011:12)

The strategy draws a distinction between Prevent work and initiatives to support integration and community cohesion, which were realigned to the Department for Communities and Local Government (DCLG). DCLG has responsibilities for building strong communities, through housing and business growth, local grants and programmes such as 'Troubled Families' which brings local services together to improve employment, education and offending outcomes. Despite the developments in the UK counter-terrorism strategy to de-securitise inclusion and community cohesion interventions, policing continues to face challenges in seeking to build perceptions of legitimacy amongst Muslim communities (Vermeulen, 2014).

The impact on wider faith communities' perceptions of legitimacy has not been specifically captured. However, looking across data that has been collected from faith communities in relation to policing suggests that there could be a relationship between some research findings and the backdrop of the securitisation and stigmatisation of Muslims in the UK. Victims of religiously-aggravated hate crime are less likely feel that the police treated them fairly or with respect (Corcorran, 2015); religiously-aggravated hate crime is significantly under-reported (Hall; 2013) often due to perceptions that the police will not take it seriously (Walters and Hoyle, 2010); and more broadly 46% of people thought that there was more religious prejudice today than there was five years ago (British Social Attitudes Survey, 2012:27), which has been echoed more recently following the rise of 'anti-immigration' public discourse following the referendum vote on UK membership of the European Union (Bauböck and Scholten, 2016). The problematisation of Muslim identities goes beyond ethnic and cultural identities and focusses on Islamic religious identities specifically in relation to citizenship and social cohesion (Spalek, 2011). This is likely therefore to resonate with others with religious identity, recognising the ever-changing

context and global space in which specific identities can rapidly be identified and homogenised as a 'problem'. Efforts of the police therefore to better engage with issues of equality and legitimacy become particularly important in preventing the development of 'resistant identities' (Spalek, 2008) who seek to challenge their discrimination and disadvantage through an alternative cause or extremist value system (Dalgard-Nielson, 2010). The collective impact of the UK approach to policing extremism in religion is likely to resonate with individuals and communities where faith is important in their self-identity and their experiences of political and social integration.

The study of the impact of counter-terrorism policing approaches and associated community policing work has focussed broadly on Muslim communities in multicultural city areas. Lambert's (2008) work exploring the difference in focus and practice of the 'diversity movement' in the Metropolitan Police Service, following the Macpherson report, highlighted the need to tailor policing approaches to specific Muslim groups. In particular, the willingness to engage with strict Muslim gender segregation on its own terms 'rather than seeking to impose secular rules of engagement [which] was sometimes wrongly interpreted by diversity policing as being exclusionary towards Muslim women' (Lambert, 2008:83). In order to engage the Salafi and Islamist community groups for example, these types of approaches were necessary. Academic study more broadly raises concerns about the 'hidden voices' behind the broad categories used by some researchers and criminal justice agencies (Garland *et al.*, 2006). The use of such categories can serve to obscure the specific experiences and opinions of the 'seldom heard' or 'hidden' minority ethnic communities that are somewhat diluted by the larger community (Spalek, 2008; Garland *et al.*, 2006). Whilst the homogenisation of groups in research and policy can exacerbate disengagement and marginalisation of individuals and groups, failure to broaden the lens of exploration of specific theory, policy or practice can also contribute to obscuring or skewing understanding. By focussing research on the experience of Muslim communities in the current context, there remains a gap in understanding the wider impact on faith groups, which hinders developmental work to prevent future policy and practice failings. Many of

the negative consequences of the approach taken to preventing Islamic extremism in the UK reflected similarities in the results and approach taken to tackling the IRA (Pantazis and Pemberton, 2009). The laws enacted, policies and procedures implemented which securitised, stigmatised and marginalised Muslims (Millings, 2013) reflect those used against Irish Catholics (Hillyard, 1993). The ever-changing context in which policing operates means that it is only a matter of time before the next 'risky' group is identified. Whilst white, working-class young men might be identified as a key perpetrator group of religious intolerance (and sexism and racism) it is more likely that minority ethnic or religious identities will be the focus of enforcement rather than preventative policy (Hopkins, 2016), which means there is an imminent need to strengthen relationships between policing and diverse faith communities.

The reviews of the CONTEST counter-terrorism strategies and the critique of the government having failed to identify or measure adverse community impact also raise issues of human rights (Husband and Alam, 2011). The Human Rights Act has been criticised widely for its limitations, predominantly because it looks at the protection of 'civil and political' rights, ignoring fundamental 'social and economic' human rights (Spalek, 2002). However, human rights are often seen to be key to identifying solutions to challenges around disunity and segregation, conflict resolution and community cohesion (Home Office, 2004). McGhee (2008:176) interprets this to mean that human rights are considered the 'social glue, the ties that bind, that will make Britain more "at ease" with its diversity'. Recognising that 'human rights are fundamentally a social, cultural and interpersonal phenomenon' (Spalek, 2008:130) enables broader discussions about the transparency of police engagement and the impact of targeting and stigmatising communities for whom a culture of fear and indignation has grown. In a context where for some bias and prejudice has become an everyday experience (Zempi and Chakraborti, 2014; Iganski, 2008) the ability for some faith communities to fully participate in society and to fulfil their rights of citizenship may have been restricted. The following section explores these issues more

broadly, moving beyond the impact of policing approaches to counter-terrorism to assess the role of government and national policy as factors in police-faith relations.

### **Policing Multiculturalism**

Mainstream public debate is considering issues of solidarity between identities and communities following the current refugee and immigration situation in Europe and the referendum on UK membership of the European Union (Bauböck and Scholten, 2016). Early assessments of reports of racism and hate crime suggest increases of 42% in June 2016 compared to June 2015 and 20% in July 2016 compared to July 2015, which the Metropolitan Police Deputy Commissioner suggests is a result of 'Brexit' (Mackey, 2016; Bradley, 2016). It is argued that the UK is distinct from other western European models of cultural diversity due to the history of postcolonial policies which focussed less on assimilation and more on issues of public order and the management of relations between majority and minority populations (Kymlicka, 2007; Favell, 1998). This history and the various iterations of the Race Relations Acts (1965, 1968, 1976, 2000) encourage public institutions to acknowledge distinct ethnic, religious and cultural identities and outlaw discrimination based on identity. This approach is argued to have created a focus on distinct group identities, primarily defined by ethnicity, which has underpinned multiculturalist policies at both national and local level (Fieschi and Johnson, 2013). This argument suggests that the framework of policies that result from this work encourage ethnic affiliation in identity as the basis of political and social organisation, which impacts on the ways in which the state identifies and engages with communities. This has implications for the intersectionality of identity in police-faith relations, creating a disposition or tendency to focus on issues of ethnicity, as opposed to faith for example, in experiences of policing or victimisation.

Supporting the view that multiculturalism policy development is focussed on public order control, Brighton (2007) suggests that multiculturalism only becomes an issue for the

government when a crisis occurs, for example the riots of Brixton in 1981 and Bradford in 2001. Both led to reports which pointed to a lack of community cohesion as the core causal factor and to the need for transformation in policing in order to function effectively in a multicultural society (Scarman, 1981; Cattle, 2001). Brighton states that the rioting that occurred in Brixton 'can thus be understood as a form of dissent in which a functional basis for integration is sought rather than as a form of dissent which marks a rejection of the multicultural ideal itself' (2007:7). Similarly, Favell (2001) argues that high unemployment and deprivation amongst black and minority ethnic groups were contributory factors in the Bradford riots, as a result of an insufficient welfare support system which created divisions between groups. This suggests that rather than identifying specific issues of prejudice between communities, the different contexts and experiences between groups fuelled conflict. The policing response to both riot incidents exacerbated community divides by creating a sense of blame against black and minority ethnic groups and 'cast a very long shadow across a number of areas of public policy' (McGhee, 2008:82). The new Commission for Equality and Human Rights was set up to address these issues and stimulated much debate about the role of multiculturalism policy in strengthening division between groups rather than cohesion (Finney and Simpson, 2009).

The Commission for Equality and Human Rights called for a future Britain that would be both 'a community of citizens and of communities', thus avoiding a liberal rights-based individualist approach or the conservative corporatism of community cohesion (Wood and Landry, 2008:61). One of the practical challenges in considering multiculturalism and cohesive communities is the role of spatial neighbourhoods, moving away from traditionalist geographic communities towards mixed neighbourhoods being considered 'communities without community' (Amin, 2002). Research into the relationship between ethnicity and location found that white households tend to move away from areas where minority ethnic households are increasing, which are then more likely to be replaced by any other minority ethnic group compared to another white group (Kaufmann, 2013). Whilst the focus of this work was ethnicity, the implications for faith groups become apparent also.

Police engagement with communities is largely defined by geographic spaces, which means visible policing of mixed groups is reduced in areas with minimal diversity. Perceptions of police engagement as equal and fair across ethnic or faith groups becomes more difficult where visible policing appears to be skewed. This has been explored as both negative bias in policing and as preferential treatment to avoid potential complaints about discrimination (MacFayden and Prideaux, 2014; McGhee, 2008). The relationship between national multiculturalism policy and policing practice is played out in police engagement and impacts on perceptions of procedural justice in both policing and government.

Multiculturalism has been interrogated about its ability to provide cultural policy for the UK which aids community integration, cohesion, solidarity and provides an over-arching form of national identity which unites all citizens (Bauböck and Scholten, 2016; Vasta, 2010; Phillips, 2005; Phillips, 2004; Goodhart, 2004). One theme within this debate suggests that too much diversity inherently undermines social cohesion due to the loss of common values which in turn threatens national identity (Alibhai-Brown, 2004; Goodhart, 2004). At the local level there have also been claims that immigrants are not integrating with other communities and that this is largely their own fault (Ghorashi, 2003). This is evident in public narrative in the UK which has shown a trend towards anti-immigration and anti-diversity (Kymlica, 2015; Back *et al.*, 2002). Those policy discourses that have rejected multiculturalism and diversity have introduced 'integration and social cohesion' as a superior model, which ultimately means immigrants and ethnic minorities are expected to integrate and choose Britishness as their national identity whilst retaining their own cultures and traditions (Vasta, 2010). This position links back to discussions of identity and relationships in communities, suggesting that the maintenance of multiple identities and positive intersectionality of those multiple identities could lead to accommodative relations between majority and minority groups. This has arguably become very difficult for some, where the secularity of public sector services and public discourse about fear of extremism in religion can lead to individuals choosing to suppress or 'down-play' faith in their public

or visible identity (Tahiri and Grossman, 2012; Bayley and Weisburd, 2011; Husband and Alam 2011; Lambert, 2008; Hopkins, 2007).

However, it has also been argued that the multiculturalism framework has survived the years of conflict following the 2001 terrorist attacks in the US, the Bradford riots in 2001 and the 2005 terrorist attacks in London, prevailing to a position where Muslim communities 'have come out of the period better organised, better represented, better understood and, dare we say it, better integrated' (Fieschi and Johnson, 2013:87). Academic support for this perspective is limited, although studies in Canada and Northern Ireland examining community policing approaches for minority groups most affected by national security measures identify some positive outcomes for building relationships and trust (Topping and Byrne, 2010; Hanniman, 2008). Similarly, policy developments in the UK relating to faith have been significant in the same period, seeing the creation of the national Interfaith Network and Interfaith Strategy, alongside religion and belief becoming protected characteristics under anti-discrimination legislation (Equality Act, 2010). However, whilst the impact of extremism has forced focus on specific aspects of faith in public policy, this does not appear to have impacted much beyond Muslim communities and 'secularism' continues to be the key focus in policy development regarding state and religion. Some argue that this is because of the history of institutional and policy linkages with aspects of Christianity which need to be unravelled in order to make space for 'moderate secularism' across all faiths rather than the absolute separation of religion and politics:

*Faced with an emergent multi-faith situation or where there is a political will to incorporate previously marginalised faiths and sects and challenge the privileged status of some religions, the context-sensitive and conservationist response may be to pluralise the state-religion link rather than sever it.*

(Modood, 2010:6)

This more accommodative secularism is considered to have developed with the perception that organised religion, or the solidarity of religious frameworks, is a form of social capital and national resource (McAndrew, 2010; Auterio and Vinci, 2009) which can aid the provision of state services such as education, health, policing and justice. The role of 'co-production' in policing, collaborating with communities to deliver neighbourhood crime prevention initiatives, has become a growing interest for criminologists over the last two decades (Glaser and Denhardt, 2010). There is a growing evidence-base for faith-based interventions and programmes in the rehabilitation and reintegration of offenders (Birdwell, 2013; Glaser and Denhardt, 2010; Wheatley and Kellner-Rogers, 1998). Knepper suggests that this link to evidence-based policy means the government can support faith-based initiatives 'because in doing so, government is not endorsing religion, but science' (Knepper, 2003:331). In the U.S., George W. Bush broke down barriers raising the profile and general public understanding of faith-based interventions in social action, encouraging religious charities to become more active in community service (Patterson, 2008:131). Some of these groups were seen to have more expertise and credibility than government agencies in the provision of services to disadvantaged communities, stimulating further involvement in the faith, crime and public policy debate (Johnson *et al.*, 2000; Thompkins and Webbs, 2002).

In the UK faith-based organisations have visibly contributed to crime prevention and community safety agendas (Birdwell, 2013). The Department for Communities and Local Government references the 'opportunities and assets' of faith community involvement in crime reduction initiatives, particularly programmes designed to reduce reoffending and increase wellbeing of offenders on release from prison (DCLG, 2008:17). Increased attention to the role of faith groups and the broader voluntary sector has also been influenced by the 'Big Society' political agenda (Cabinet Office, 2010). Launched in 2010 under the Coalition Government, this agenda sought to engage communities in the responsibility, participation and provision of the services they require. The closer relationship this has developed between government and some faith groups is likely to



impact on wider faith-state and faith-police relationships. The impact of 'co-production' in policing and state support for faith-based initiatives in public safety has not been explored as factors in perceptions of procedural justice, legitimacy or confidence in policing.

To achieve sustainable integration, co-production and participation across diverse groups, Brighton (2007:6) states that 'a process is to be created and governed between distinct but equivalent groups whose identity is to be defined by "culture" rather than "race"'. This shift to focus on culture enables 'pluralistic integration' which recognises the intersectionality of identity in different contexts (Modood, 2006:4). The philosophy of 'interculturalism' captures this need for fluidity and pluralism and is increasingly being recognised as an alternative to multiculturalism (Bauböck and Scholten, 2016; Bouchard, 2011; Kymlicka, 2007; Kymlicka, 2003). Interculturalism considers cultures to be dynamic identities and requires communication between individuals of different cultures rather than 'mere passive acceptance' of the differences between them (Sáenz, 2006:15). Described as 'cultural exchange', interculturalism is less 'groupist' than multiculturalism and creates a sense of societal cohesion across cultural groups (Fieschi and Johnson, 2013; 2012; Brahm Levey, 2012; Meer and Modood, 2011). The challenge is then embedding interculturalism in policy and practice. The cultural challenges in policing discussed in the previous chapter present significant barriers to achieving this, particularly the preference in policing to focus on prolific offenders and geographical hotspots rather than understanding local communities (Campeau, 2015). Equally, beyond creating changes within policing in the UK, enabling faith communities to articulate themselves and to participate in 'cultural exchange' may be problematic where a history of distrust and disengagement exist (Antrobus *et al.*, 2015).

## **Conclusion**

Community policing in theory provides the opportunity to build legitimacy, trust and confidence between policing and faith communities. However, in practice policing culture

largely denotes engagement with faith communities as a 'diversity' issue and instead places value and investment in 'tough' crime control strategies. Community policing has predominantly focussed on preventing community unrest and divisions between communities where issues of deprivation, disengagement and marginalisation from political and social integration exist. The limitations of community policing to build relationships beyond the most visible groups presents challenges to its effectiveness in engaging diverse faith groups.

The links between community policing and counter-terrorism create further risks in promoting a procedural justice model of policing which is transparent and fair. The focus on specific identities, homogenisation and securitisation of groups reflects a policing approach which sacrifices legitimacy and cooperation with communities in favour of enforcement. This position arguably reflects the relationship between national multiculturalism policy and policing strategy, which essentially demands 'others' to 'fit in'. Developments in interculturalism and 'co-production' in policing begin to point to policy and practice ideas which enable inclusive and appreciative dialogue and facilitate greater equality of participation in policing. However, whilst barriers to interaction and engagement with policing exist, this will be a complex route to navigate, particularly where faith hate victimisation continues to be under-reported. Those who report to the police can be left with lower perceptions of legitimacy and trust in policing.

## **Chapter Four**

### **Policing Faith Hate Crime**

#### **Introduction**

Perceptions and experience of faith hate crime and associated police responses are a key consideration in assessment of police-faith relations. There is clear evidence to show that being targeted because of who you are has a greater impact on wellbeing than being the victim of a non-targeted crime (Iganski, 2008). Hate crimes can have dramatic emotional and physical effects on victims, their families and minority communities more generally, including fear of additional victimisation, post-traumatic stress disorder and questioning self-identity (Awan and Zempi, 2015; Chakraborti and Garland, 2015; Hall, 2015; Chakraborti *et al.*, 2014; Smith *et al.*, 2012). The introduction of religion as a stand-alone strand of hate crime and the inclusive approach to recording practice adopted in the UK have contributed to increasing awareness of faith hate crime in policing. However, policing faces several challenges in its response to faith hate crime, in particular the under-reporting of victimisation, cultural barriers to improving policing practice and recognition and engagement of marginalised faith groups. Beyond anti-Muslim and anti-Jewish victimisation, there is limited empirical research which explores the direct or indirect experience of hate crime across other faith communities and how this may influence perceptions of police legitimacy, willingness to report victimisation to the police and broader police-faith relations.

This chapter begins by discussing recognition of faith hate crime, exploring developments in recording practice which promote an inclusive understanding of the impact of faith hate crime in communities. The problem of under-reporting is examined in relation to issues of police culture and practice. This chapter then builds on previous discussion about the government's role in 'policing multiculturalism', addressing the role of the state and

policing in creating an 'enabling environment' in which prejudice and faith hate crime can flourish (Perry, 2010).

## **Recognition of Faith Hate Crime**

As highlighted in the introduction to this thesis, public and political attention to faith hate crime has increased in recent years, following high-profile international religious extremism and terrorism, which has fuelled 'backlash' attacks in the UK (Awan and Zempi, 2015; Giannasi, 2015; Hall, 2015). For example, increases in reports of faith hate crime were seen after the murder of Lee Rigby in 2013 and the conflict in Israel and Gaza in 2014 (Corcoran *et al.*, 2015). Plausible links between anti-Muslim hate crime and the release of violent ISIS videos online has also been suggested (Clayton *et al.*, 2016). Recent production of hate crime policies, strategies and guidance across the government, policing and justice agencies also suggests this context has brought increased attention to hate crime in communities (Home Office, 2016; NOMS, 2016; College of Policing 2014; CPS 2014). However, issues of under-reporting (discussed in detail in the following section) and under-recording of hate crime hinders progression to achieve recognition of forms of inequality and oppression across marginalised groups (Perry, 2015; McLaughlin, 2002).

One of the main issues causing the under-recording of hate crime is the failure of policing and local authorities to identify and capture 'low level' incidents which might be categorised as antisocial behaviour or domestic disputes (Walters *et al.*, 2016a). The inclusive model of recording hate crime adopted in the UK was designed to tackle this issue - where it is the perception of the victim, or any other person, that is key in determining whether an incident is regarded as a hate incident or not, rather than the explicit motivation of the perpetrator (College of Policing, 2014). This is a far more inclusive measure than is used by police in many other countries and contributes to the explanation of the significant differences in recorded hate crime in England and Wales, compared to the US and Australia, for example (Mason *et al.*, 2016). This 'inclusive' model of recording hate crime has had a

significant impact on records of hate crime (Home Office, 2012) arguably providing a more informed picture of the prevalence of hate crime from the perception of victims and communities.

However, the interchangeable use of words such as 'Islam', 'Muslims' and 'Arabs' creates perpetual confusion between religion and race in understanding victimisation (Copsey, *et al.*, 2013; Perry, 2009). Whilst legislation has drawn a specific distinction between 'religiously-aggravated' and 'racially-aggravated' offences since 2001 (Home Office, 2001), the reliability of the categorisation of incidents and crimes over the last fifteen years has been questioned. Faith hate crimes that happened before the changes to legislation may have been recorded as racial hate crimes or not reported at all, which has implications for understanding the true extent of the rise in incidents seen since then. For example, the impact of the 9/11 and 7/7 terrorist attacks on anti-Muslim incidents was argued to be 'blurred' by the change in legislation (Home Affairs Select Committee, 2005). However, Poynting and Perry argue that despite the changes in recording practice 'the trend is undeniable' in terrorist attacks related to Islamic extremism and anti-Muslim hate crime (Poynting and Perry, 2007:155-56). Whilst the distinction between race and religion is important in understanding the prevalence and nature of hate crime, the intersectionality of identity in victimisation is increasingly being considered in understanding victimisation (Bish, 2015; Zempi and Chakraborti, 2014). Race and religion have been described as 'mutually reinforcing phenomena' in some contexts and situations, which challenges thinking about hate crime in relation to singular aspects of identity (Awan and Zempi, 2015:14). In this sense, drawing distinct lines between race and religion in understanding the impact of hate crime victimisation can skew or narrow understanding towards specific experiences.

The broader impact of both race and faith hate crime on minority and marginalised identities and groups has been highlighted in the months following the UK referendum on membership of the European Union, which has brought issues of national identity,

immigration and community-relations to the fore (Walters *et al.*, 2016b). As explored in Chapter Two, academic theory relating to identity, groups, 'Othering' and prejudice provide useful perspectives through which to understand this post-Brexit climate. Research suggests that anti-Jewish and anti-Muslim incidents are often committed by 'ordinary' people in their everyday lives, 'not by extremists in the pursuit of ideological goals' (Iganski, 2008:31, Iganski and Sweiry, 2016). This concept of 'everyday hate' suggests that hate crime is not necessarily the act of an abnormal, irrational or pathological individual, but instead may be a representation of what is perceived by the offender to be a rational assertion about their own identity and belonging over and above others (Iganski and Sweiry, 2016; Perry, 2005). The views of the wider community can therefore shape and legitimise the perpetrator's behaviour (Sibbitt, 1997).

Millings (2013) highlights the connections between the growth of racist groupings in many large European cities, anti-Muslim racism and the racialisation of asylum seekers, which he argues 'serves to emphasize that hate crime is based on constructions of group boundaries such as culture, religion, ethnic heritage and supposed racial lineage' (Millings, 2013:1077). This echoes Iganski's (2008) description of 'hotspotting' of race-hate crime in the Barnet and Lambeth areas of London where 'people were thrown together in the melee of everyday urban life: areas in which everyday conflicts and routine incivilities occur, and areas which experience higher volumes of crime in general, not just hate crime' (Iganski, 2008:71). Links between geography, socio-economics, deprivation and integration with reports of hate crime highlight the intersectionality of experience for victims of hate crime. However, these studies tend to focus on multicultural cities and tend to reference racism, which leaves gaps in understanding of faith hate crime in 'everyday' towns and places where the role or strength of the 'perpetrator community', state and policing discourse may be experientially different. Recognition of faith hate crime is likely to be higher in multicultural areas where reports to police are more frequent compared to 'everyday' places with limited cultural diversity and lower levels of crime in general.

Across reports of hate crime figures by the Home Office or the Crime Survey for England and Wales, the results tend to be aggregated data across all religions (Corcoran *et al*, 2015; CSEW, 2015). Specific anti-Muslim and anti-Jewish hate crime figures are often reported by interest groups and third party reporting organisations such as Tell Mama, the Commission on British Muslims and Islamophobia and the Community Security Trust. The Leicester Hate Crime Project is one outlier, which produced a briefing paper addressing religiously motivated hate crime, gathering insights from victims across ten different faith groups. The key findings highlighted differences between faith groups, for example Christians were more likely to report regular verbal abuse, 38 per cent compared to 19 per cent of Muslims and 4 per cent of Hindus, and that experiences of violent crime were slightly more frequent for Hindus, 46 per cent, and Muslims, 42 per cent, than for people from other faith groups (Chakraborti, Garland and Hardy, 2014:8). Whilst hate crime against Muslims is a specific focus in policy and academic study presently, the connection between international conflict persecuting various faiths, including Christians, Buddhists, Hindus and Sikhs, and local acts of hostility and hate crime have been shown (Littler and Feldman, 2015; Corcoran *et al*, 2015; Giannasi, 2015). An inclusive approach to understanding faith hate crime and its impact on victims and communities needs to consider global events and their influence on local perceptions of the state, policing and community relationships. Minority faith groups, or specific identities within faith groups, without lobbyists or support networks and without perceived need for a 'voice', are not recognised as readily as others due to being less visible (Chakraborti and Garland, 2012; Spalek, 2008). These identities and groups are therefore less likely to receive protection and support from the police or recognition from authorities and the state.

Whilst the inclusive model of recording hate crime enables a more reliable capture of experiences of faith hate crime, it is argued that 'over-inclusive' approaches to recording hate crime can risk inflating perceptions of hate crime and raising public expectations for the provision of policing services (Fleming and McLaughlin, 2010). This also means that there is a large gap between police recorded hate crime and prosecution of perpetrators

(CPS, 2012), which may impact on public confidence in policing effectiveness and ‘may undermine the legitimacy of policing policy by severing the connection between the operation of the policy and any legal standard’ (Mason *et al.*, 2016:686). However, the need to improve reporting of hate crime requires an approach which recognises hate crime and the impact of hate crime on victims and communities. This includes recognition of the indirect impact of hate crime targeted towards a shared aspect of identity, such as faith or ‘minority’ status, which can generate similar emotional and behavioural responses to those directly victimised (Perry and Alvi, 2012). Willingness to report victimisation to the police increases with higher perceptions of fairness, trust and procedural justice in policing (Hough *et al.*, 2013; Jackson *et al.*, 2013) which suggests reporting behaviour is an indicator of the strength of police-faith relations.

### **Reporting Faith Hate Crime**

The under-reporting of hate crime is a significant issue which limits the potential of government, policing and justice responses (Walters *et al.*, 2016a; Awan and Zempi, 2015; Chakraborti and Hardy, 2015). In 2014/15 3,254 hate crimes relating to ‘religion’ were reported to the police, whilst the Crime Survey for England and Wales report approximately 38,000 hate crimes relating to ‘religion’ for the equivalent period (Corcoran *et al.*, 2015). This suggests that fewer than 10 per cent of faith hate crimes are reported to the police, compared to approximately 48 per cent of all strands of hate crime (Corcoran *et al.*, 2015). Reasons for reluctance to report hate crime are wide ranging, but studies suggest that factors include the regularity or volume of incidents, perceptions of seriousness, mistrust of the police, fear of reprisal, being ‘outed’, being seen as ‘weak’ and language barriers (Walters *et al.*, 2016a; Awan and Zempi, 2015; Chakraborti and Hardy, 2015; Giannasi, 2015; James, 2014; Home Office, Office for National Statistics and Ministry of Justice 2013). Police practice and cultures within policing have been highlighted as factors that fuel reluctance to report hate crime (Mason *et al.*, 2016, Chakraborti and Hardy, 2015; Hall, 2015).



Perceptions within policing that engagement with issues of 'diversity', faith and hate crime are 'soft and fluffy' activities best suited to 'specialists', or framed by concerns about political correctness, hinder opportunities to improve reporting of hate crime (McFayden and Prideaux, 2014; Rowe and Garland, 2013). Perceptions of legitimacy and empathy in policing are related to willingness to report crime and to participate in justice processes (Hough *et al.*, 2013; Jackson *et al.*, 2013). The development of specialist hate crime units in most police forces was designed to tackle this issue, providing 'experts' to build trust and confidence across diverse communities. Conversely, specialist teams have increased perceptions amongst 'generalist' frontline officers that hate crime is 'not their problem' and some regard it as 'grievous' work due to its complexities and the difficulty of proving motive (Hall, 2005: 157-200; Hall, 2013). Police officers own personal biases, and in some cases laziness, have also been found to play a role in the recognition and recording of crime as hate crime (Gerstenfeld, 2013).

Mason *et al.* (2016) suggest these types of 'organisational issues' are exacerbated by limited resources, unclear leadership and out-dated occupational cultures in policing which focus on traditional measures of performance. They suggest that a more holistic approach to implementing hate crime policies in policing is needed, which builds understanding of new and emerging communities and strengthens social inclusion programmes (Mason *et al.*, 2016). This reflects the issues discussed in the previous chapter, which identified a lack of clarity of responsibility and ownership for community engagement in a context that pulls PCSOs into enforcement activities and a culture that devalues 'diversity' and community relationships (Cosgrove, 2015). This creates significant challenges to embedding approaches that seek to build relationships across diverse faith communities, particularly marginalised groups, where these activities are deemed 'soft' and undesirable (Rowe and Garland, 2013). Developing a culture of understanding the impact of faith hate crime victimisation in policing appears to be a complex problem, which requires the alignment of resources, leadership and culture (Mason *et al.*, 2016).

One of the key challenges for policing is the power of hate crime to silence victims (Herek *et al.*, 2002). Even minor expressions of hostility toward minorities can be traumatic ‘given that minorities are well aware of the extreme violence that has been perpetrated on members of their group’ (Herek *et al.*, 2002:336). Hate crime can be experienced as control and manipulation, whereby perpetrators can cause victims to feel isolated and excluded from spaces, services and activities (Perry, 2015; Chakraborti, Garland and Hardy, 2014). By eroding feelings of safety and security, everyday experiences of hate crime impact the behaviours of the ‘Other’ and can serve to silence threatened communities and influence them to conceal their identities (Asquith, 2004). This has been demonstrated by British Muslims reporting a higher level of discrimination and abuse when they appear ‘conspicuously Muslim’ than when they do not (Meer, 2008:72; Zempi and Chakraborti, 2014) and young British Muslims choosing to conceal their faith and practice to avoid potential victimisation (Husband and Allam, 2010). This has become particularly relevant for Asian communities where backlash attacks have affected individuals who resemble Muslims, which in turn impacts upon relationships and integration between different faith groups within Asian communities (Millings, 2013; Meer, 2008). There is a tendency in hate crime policy to suggest that hate crime is perpetrated by the majority against the minority, failing to account for minority prejudice towards other minority groups (Chakraborti, 2015). This reminder is pertinent to understanding the impact of hate crime on cohesion between individuals and groups, recognising the complexity of shared ethnic identity alongside different faith identity.

Police practice also plays a role in reluctance to report faith hate crime, particularly in relation to Muslim communities, where the primary contemporary focus of policing is their vulnerability to extremism rather than their vulnerability to targeted victimisation and hate crime (McGhee, 2010:170). The effect of hate crime on an individual in this context is likely to be heightened due to the ‘compelling intersectionality of policing, racism, ethnicity and citizenship’ (Millings, 2013:1079). The experience of faith hate crime becomes more complex for individuals and communities who feel marginalised, unprotected and

disengaged from policing. This perspective is supported by research, which suggests that the historical continuity of hate crime victimisation and the 'complicity of mainstream institutions and culture in their victimisation', increase the impact of hate crime on the individual (Boeckmann and Turpin-Petrosino, 2002:209). Sociological and criminological research has long demonstrated that black and Asian minorities have been treated as 'Other' within the criminal justice system (Mythen *et al.*, 2009:3), particularly in relation to disproportionality in police surveillance, criminal justice interventions, penal sanctions and forms of sentencing (Loftus, 2009; Spalek, 2008; Heaven and Hudson 2007; Hudson, 2006). The role of the criminal justice system in causing 'secondary victimisation' has been explored in relation to various types of crime, particularly experiences of not being taken seriously by the police due to bias or lack of empathy (Wemmers, 2013). Perceptions of the 'Othering' of specific faith groups or identities impacts on perceptions of procedural justice and legitimacy in policing and willingness to cooperate with the police and to report crime (Murphy and Cherney, 2011). This has implications across faith groups, not just Muslims, where identification with minority or 'subordinate' status is likely to impact on willingness to report victimisation.

Third party reporting tools have been developed to tackle some of these issues, enabling victims to report incidents with a choice about whether they are passed onto the police. The main examples include True Vision, which is a reporting website set up and funded by the Association of Chief Police Officers for the UK (now the National Police Chief's Council); TellMama, an independent organisation measuring anti-Muslim attacks; and ARCH, a local partnership approach to reporting all forms of hate crime and discrimination specifically for Newcastle (Clayton *et al.*, 2016). Beyond increasing reporting of hate crime, the links between third party agencies and support services are recognised as particularly important due to the lack of expertise in policing and criminal justice agencies to support victims emotionally (Iganski and Sweiry, 2016). However, public awareness of third party reporting agencies is a key issue in their effectiveness (Chakraborti and Hardy, 2015; Chakraborti and Garland, 2015) and it is recognised that the data gathered from third parties is therefore

‘constructed, fallible and a broad-brush portrait of the experience of incidents (Clayton *et al.*, 2016:66). Whilst critiques of the reliability of the data collected by third party agencies is recognised, reports such as the 373% increase in anti-Muslim hate incidents reported to Tell Mama following the murder of Lee Rigby, help to provide information about perceptions of faith hate crime in communities (Tell Mama, 2015).

Walters and Hoyle (2010) suggest that the push to improve reporting and prosecution of hate crime is driven both by the need to help victims to feel that justice has been done and to help create a social climate that rejects public displays of identity prejudice (Walters and Hoyle, 2010). Chakraborti (2016) argues that empirical research evidence about what victims want is detached from policy development, for example in punitive, criminal justice focussed outcomes for perpetrators as opposed to interventions that might tackle the underlying prejudice that fuelled victimisation. Walters and Hoyle (2010) argue that ‘increasingly punitive responses do little to repair the harms experienced by victims – beyond perhaps an initial visceral satisfaction that the offender is being hurt – and fail effectively to challenge the prejudices of individual offenders’ (Walters and Hoyle, 2010:243-244). They suggest greater efficacy for both victims and offenders can be found in the use of restorative justice practices, both in community mediation and in addition to criminal sanctions. They found that restorative justice meetings may help victim recovery by reducing feelings of fear, anger and insecurity (Walters and Hoyle, 2010). Assessment of new models of support for victims of hate crime is becoming increasingly important as the impact of austerity continues to reduce victim support service provision (Clayton *et al.*, 2016). Whilst the challenges raised by prosecutors in balancing ‘hatred’ against free speech protections and the difficulty to prove ‘motive’ are wrestled with (McPhail and Jenness 2006), the use of restorative justice outside of court offers potential to reduce the long-term impact of hate crime on victims.

The developments in policy and practice to improve the reporting of hate crime are important in the journey to increasing recognition of hate crime across government and

criminal justice agencies. Policing cultures and practices continue to exacerbate the exclusion of minority identities and groups, which hinders opportunities to improve engagement and reporting across diverse faith groups affected by faith hate crime. Beyond reporting, academics and policymakers underline the need to challenge the underlying beliefs and attitudes that fuel prejudice and hate crime in society, addressing individual, institutional and structural factors that are causal to hate-motivated offences (Walters, 2016; Home Office, 2016; Chakraborti, 2015). The following section explores these issues, addressing the role of state policy and discourse in providing a context in which violence against oppressed and minority groups can flourish.

### **The State, Policing and Faith Hate Crime**

The role of the state is inextricably linked to the construction of difference due to its role in constructing a hierarchy of identities (Mason-Bish, 2010; Perry, 2005). Policing is also implicit within the structural, cultural and everyday practice and discourse of the state that preserves recognition of the majority and misrecognition of the minority (Walters *et al.*, 2016b). The ramifications of this for Muslim people in the UK is a commonly used example, where media and public discourse around illegal immigration, fraudulent welfare claims, 'honour killings', 'extremism' and child sexual exploitation have defined British Muslims as a risky population (Feldman *et al.*, 2013; Poole, 2006). Poynting and Perry (2007) argue that anti-Muslim violence rose as anti-Muslim practices were instituted and intensified by the state, effectively adding weight to this public discourse about Muslims. This argument is reflected again more recently in examining the impact of political and public discourse around the referendum on EU membership, which appeared to fuel anti-diversity rhetoric and increased attacks on minority ethnic and faith groups (Corcoran and Smith, 2016; Walters *et al.*, 2016b).

Millings' (2013) qualitative study of young British Asian men in 2002 and again in 2012 explores an emerging 'cultural sociology of policing', which addresses the concept that an

individual's interaction with, and perception of, the police reflects or reaffirms their relationship with the state more generally (Millings, 2013:1076).

*The sense that policing can send (and the men interpret) powerful messages of acceptance or rejection is bolstered further in how the group have come to understand the government's efforts to combat terrorism and religious extremism—specifically the Prevent strategy. This second, and more rooted, intimate and powerful policing practice centres upon the role of local/national anti-terror discourses that, in the minds of the men, problematise them individually and collectively.*

(Millings, 2013:1086)

The government's Prevent strategy, discussed in detail in the previous chapter, is a part of the CONTEST strategy for countering terrorism and is one of four strands: 'Prevent, Pursue, Protect and Prepare' (HM Government, 2006:1). 'Prevent' focussed on understanding radicalisation and extremism and protecting those vulnerable to it. This part of the strategy was supported by the Department for Communities and Local Government, which launched the Preventing Violent Extremism Pathfinder Fund (PVEPF) in October 2006. This fund was designed to enable local communities to challenge ideas of extremism at the local level and to deliver 'local solutions to local problems' (DCLG, 2007:4). The offer and receipt of resource under this programme created tension amongst Muslim communities due to the perceived acceptance of the 'terror threat' label and amongst wider communities due to perceived unfair allocation of resources (Husband and Allam, 2011). Millings (2013) also found that young British Asian men tended to believe that 'the police are purposefully undermining the life chances and self-esteem of British Asian communities through generating a climate of fear that sees them allocated more resources' (Millings, 2013:1087). In this sense, the police represent a threat to Muslim communities in their communication and engagement, which is driven by counter-terrorism aims and which tarnishes investment in communities. Ashan (2011) argues that the Prevent strategy failed to understand British Muslims exploring their religious heritage and instead of taking an

approach of learning, has excluded British Muslims from political dialogue. Similarly, research examining the Australian Cronulla Beach riots suggested the politics of multiculturalism and the role of state rhetoric played out in police practice and helped shape a 'permission to hate' (Poynting, 2006:88). The visible nature of the majority of policing activity inextricably links it to national policy and state discourse, which means policing can play a significant role in building or diminishing a sense of citizenship and belonging. As discussed in the previous chapter, the role of multiculturalism policy in the inclusion and exclusion of faith groups interconnects with their perceptions and experiences of fairness and legitimacy in policing.

The ability of the police to 'evoke, affirm, reinforce or (even) undermine social relations' allows the police to play a significant role in defining the culture, morality, order and empowerment of specific social groups (Loader and Mulcahy 2003:39). This 'cultural work' of the police relates to Fraser's (1995; 2000; 2003) interrelated concepts of recognition and misrecognition as defined by the police. She argues that 'the police are a social institution with whom recognition must be negotiated', whereby some categories of social actors will be deemed valid and legitimate whilst others will be deficient or inferior (Fraser 2000:114). The legacy of perceived alignment between policing in Northern Ireland with the Protestant majority as opposed to the Catholic minority over decades of community conflict continues to play a role in perceptions of legitimacy in policing (Ellison, 2012; Ellison, 2001). The use of a community organisation as a 'responsible participant', essentially an independent partner, was found to be ineffective in building trust and confidence between communities and policing in Belfast (Ellison, 2012). Research suggests that community policing has been the most effective method to reducing the disconnect between the Police Service of Northern Ireland (PSNI) and working class communities (Jarman, 2002). However, the tenuous relationship between public involvement and police accountability at the community level is compounded by the fact that it is the Protestant majority who actually participate (Topping, 2008), which reiterates the 'cultural work' of the police as maintaining division between communities.

*It is clear that the rhetoric of transparency and accountability for policing through [local meetings] has been characterised by what may be perceived as a self-justifying, police-centric 'closed shop' for a significant Protestant majority over the last five years.* (Topping, 2008:7)

Topping argues that whilst the PSNI has been radically transformed in the post-Patten era, 'the change to policing on the ground has been largely unaffected' (Topping, 2008:16) and genuine involvement of minority groups in policing has not progressed. Chakraborti and Garland (2012) take this issue further to suggest that 'undesirable' groups, for example the homeless, those with drug and alcohol dependency and refugees, may also be excluded from participation because they lack lobby group support and political relevance (Chakraborti and Garland, 2012:504).

Greater recognition of multiple outgroup status and the intersectionality of identity across faith groups in relation to participation and voice in policing policy and practice is required (Mason-Bish, 2014; Dunbar, 2006). Building understanding of perceptions and experiences of hate crime across faith groups would broaden the picture of impact from those directly affected to include those who share aspects of identity or minority status. For example, gender, visible faith identity and living in areas of higher crime, all play a role in risk of hate crime victimisation (Awan and Zempi, 2015; Zempi and Chakraborti, 2014; Ryan and Leeson, 2011; Iganski, 2008). The perceptions and experiences across Sikh, Hindu and Baha'i individuals and groups therefore become relevant to understanding the broader impact of hate crime on feelings of belonging, citizenship and relations with policing and the state. These issues are strongly linked to the broader policy agendas of multiculturalism, integration and tackling the hierarchy of identities facilitated by state discourse (Mason-Bish, 2010). State policy and discourse play a significant role in shaping perceptions of procedural justice and legitimacy in policing, which are fundamental to achieving positive police-faith relations.



## **Conclusion**

The implementation of an inclusive recording model in the UK has improved recognition of individuals and communities affected by hate crime. There are significant challenges to policing in response to faith hate crime, in particular increasing reporting to the police, which is layered with complex issues of police engagement, procedural justice and legitimacy. Cultural barriers that devalue engagement activities with diverse faith communities and limit resources available to invest in building positive community relationships also present issues in improving policing faith hate crime. The 'cultural work' of the police in the recognition and mis-recognition of faith communities requires further examination, particularly in relation to the potential 'indirect' impact on perceptions of policing in groups less likely to be direct targets of faith hate crime. Where faith is important in self-identity, witnessing the recognition and treatment of other faith groups as 'in-group' or 'out-group' in relation to state discourse and police practice is likely to influence personal perceptions of police legitimacy. The role of the state in creating an 'enabling environment' (Perry, 2001) for faith hate crime, prejudice or the dominance of majority groups provides an opportunity to reassess the relationship between policing and faith communities with a wider lens.

## **Chapter Five**

### **Methodology**

#### **Introduction**

The first three chapters of this thesis have reviewed literature exploring factors affecting the relationship between policing and faith communities in the UK and have raised several issues for further consideration. The interplay between the central themes of identity and intersectionality in perceptions of procedural justice and legitimacy in policing has been established as an important area in the study of police-faith relations. Whilst existing research contributes theory and insight into police culture, policy and practice and the factors which influence perceptions of legitimacy in particular, limited research examines these issues specifically in relation to faith, or beyond Muslim and Jewish communities. This study therefore seeks to provide an in-depth exploration of the relationship between policing and faith communities more broadly. Examining police policy and practice through a case study of one area, this research draws on the perspectives and experiences of police officers and faith communities to develop insight into their relations. Undertaking this research in an 'everyday' place also provides a new perspective on police-faith relations, moving beyond the examination of broader issues of diversity in multicultural cities.

The chapter begins by discussing the qualitative research design and methods utilised in this study, describing an interpretivist epistemological approach to the study of police-faith relations which focuses on these relationships as social processes and social constructs. The delivery of the research is described, including identification and access to the sample of participants and the methodological and practical challenges of conducting qualitative interviews. The chapter moves on to address ethical considerations in this study and explains the use of grounded theory in the method for data analysis. My role as researcher is critically examined in relation to identity and insider/outsider status in conducting

research across policing and faith communities, considering issues of identity and the reification of marginalisation through research.

## **Context**

This is a case study of a largely rural county in the Midlands region of England, encompassing several borough or district areas and small towns. The Police Service is a medium sized force with, at March 2016 (Home Office, 2016), in the region of one thousand police officers, one hundred Police Community Support Officers, eight hundred police staff and several hundred Special Constables. The county is resident to between 600,000 and 800,000 people and the communities across the towns and villages vary in culture. According to Census 2011 data, and reflecting many other rural counties; 59 per cent of residents state they are Christian, 29 per cent state no religion and 7 per cent did not state their religion (Census, 2011). A total of 4 per cent stated a religion other than Christian; including 0.3 per cent Buddhist, 1 per cent Hindu, 0.1 per cent Jewish, 2 per cent Muslim, 0.4 per cent Sikh and 0.4 per cent 'Other religion' (Census, 2011). Across the towns in the county, three have particularly significant Muslim, Hindu and Sikh communities and Jewish families reside across the county but tend to congregate in the largest town in the centre to attend activities and events at the Synagogue. Christian communities dominate across the county, particularly in more rural areas.

The majority of research addressing police-faith relations tends to have focussed on Muslim and Jewish communities and is undertaken in larger, multicultural areas where the proportion of those communities are relatively high (Husband and Alam, 2011; Lambert, 2008; Keilinger and Paterson, 2007). Research addressing the spatial dynamics of hate crime in the city, rural areas and small towns (Clayton *et al.*, 2016; Iganski and Sweiry, 2016; Chakraborti, Garland and Hardy, 2014; Hall, 2013; Iganski, 2008) demonstrate the variety of contexts in which hate crime incidents occur and the impact of geography and local context on reporting behaviours and policing responses. The connection between global

events to local acts and sites of hostility and violence (Anthias, 2006) alongside the low reporting rates for hate-crime (Hall, 2013) means the potential direct and indirect impact of faith hate crime is largely unknown across faith groups. The findings of this research study are therefore applicable to both areas with small proportions of faith communities and little community unrest and the more complex city and urban areas where greater diversity in faith communities and policing tactics may be present.

Iganski's research into hate crimes against Jewish people in London found that the majority of incidents displayed a 'common-sense anti-Semitism', where bigotry lay beneath the surface of everyday cognition and presented itself when triggered by commonplace irritations, annoyances or conflict in everyday life (Iganski, 2008:31; Iganski, *et al.* 2005). This concept of 'everyday hate' reinforces the argument that hate crime may be a representation of what is perceived by the perpetrator to be a rational assertion about their own identity and belongingness over and above others (Perry, 2005). Arguably, in an 'everyday town' where all other faith groups except Christians are a minority, the act of hostility based on a strong sense of 'belongingness' in perpetrators is perhaps more likely to be played out. Equally, the experience of marginalisation or disengagement from policing may be felt more strongly in areas of lower diversity. The exploration of relationships between faith communities and policing beyond metropolitan and diverse geographies will therefore contribute further insight to issues of integration, belonging and recognition across faith groups. Reflecting on the discussion in Chapter Two, the 'cultural work' of the police identified in multicultural cities also needs exploring in smaller and less diverse cities and towns, where policing approaches may differ. The study of police-faith relations in an 'everyday town' therefore provides the opportunity to assess phenomena related to other geographies, contexts and identities, in the case study area.

An important aspect of the context in which this research is being undertaken includes the introduction of Police and Crime Commissioners in 2012, which has been described as the most radical reform to policing in England and Wales in a generation (Newburn, 2012). It

changes the relationship between the public and the police through the democratically elected role with powers to appoint and remove Chief Constables and a mandate to make the police more accountable to the public (HM Government, 2010). The Police and Crime Commissioner in the case study area actively supported police-community engagement and engagement across diverse faith groups. I worked for the Police and Crime Commissioner for the vast majority of this study, which generated relationships with several members of faith communities who were involved with the Office of the Police and Crime Commissioner through community safety grants and funding and voluntary roles. These aspects of my role within the research context will be discussed later in the chapter.

## **Research Design**

In order to meet the objectives of this research study a qualitative inquiry into the perceptions, experiences and interactions between policing and faith communities was required. The use of an interpretive paradigm enables an exploratory approach which seeks to understand the social and symbolic construction and reconstruction of relationships (Yanow and Schwartz-Shea, 2014). The previous chapters reviewed concepts of intersectionality and the cultural work or 'sociology' of policing in validating or rejecting specific communities (Millings, 2013). The perceptions and experiences that are interpreted as validation or rejection can be explored through an ontological perspective that assumes the phenomenon under scrutiny is socially constructed, subjectively created and co-created by individuals and groups (Tracy, 2013). By using an epistemological position which supports the creation of knowledge through gaining a sense of individual and collective experience, this research 'provides opportunities for participant voice' to build understanding of police and faith community perceptions and experiences of each other (Ortner, 2003). The interpretive paradigm therefore provides an approach to understanding 'truth' which aligns with the objectives of this research and places significant value on the processes of social construction that generate the lived experience of both faith communities and policing.

Critical theorists argue that this type of interpretive research risks missing complex political factors due to the naivety of using situated data without questioning participants' words (Tracey, 2013). Fricker (2000), a feminist researcher, supports this view, suggesting that discourses based on knowledge that is local and situated cannot engage with wider political and social arguments that may be unjust, and that even 'localisms' will not be devoid of power (Fricker, 2000). In a similar vein, the concept of a 'social identity' itself has come into question as a reliable source of meaning due to the fluid and ever-changing nature of identity being contingent upon broader social, cultural, political and historical factors (Yanow, 2014; Imtoul, 2006). Imtoul (2006:106) questions, 'if social identities are so problematic, distinct and contestable, how valid is this notion as a tool through which to accumulate knowledge about social phenomena?' These arguments challenge the social constructionist epistemology and in relation to this research, question the use of concepts of identity and intersectionality in experience and relationships due to their changing nature. However, this research seeks to develop understanding of the local, situated context in order to explore police-faith relations at a point in time, accepting that many factors are at play in the lived experience of the participants involved.

Miller and Fox (2001) argue for a 'perspectivism epistemology' which counters critical assessments of research methods, denying that any research method can claim to 'know the incontrovertible Truth', and instead accepts that 'knowledge is a matter of the perspective of the knower within a community of other knowers' (Miller and Fox, 2001:675). This challenge to positivist, realist and critical epistemologies emphasises the roles of the individuals in communities, the 'knowers', and values their perspectives and experiences. This study aligns with this approach, examining the role of policing and faith communities as actors within their relationships, developing understanding about how perceptions, experiences and relationships are constructed and what processes might be involved in their reconstruction. This approach therefore has synergy with the social constructionist epistemology, which enables exploration of the

cultural, structural, institutional and behavioural factors in the ways in which policing and faith communities interact and experience each other (Yanow, 2014; Hawkesworth, 2014).

Debates about research methodologies and alignment with ontological and epistemological positions have progressed to include consideration of appropriate measures of external validity and reliability over the last two decades (Yanow and Schwartz-Shea, 2014; Rolfe, 2006). Qualitative research studies, particularly where case studies and small numbers of interviews are used, can be seen as problematic in their ability to produce research findings that can be generalised across social settings (Schwartz-Shea, 2014). Guba and Lincoln (1994, 2005) suggest that the measures for assessing reliability and validity in qualitative research should differ from those traditionally used in quantitative research studies, recognising the differences between people and objects and that exact replication of studies or findings may not be relevant in qualitative study. Instead they propose that trustworthiness and authenticity should be the two primary criteria for assessment (Guba and Lincoln, 2005). Trustworthiness encompasses measures of credibility, transferability, dependability and confirmability. Authenticity uses measures concerned with the wider political impact of the research; fairness, ontological authenticity, educative authenticity, catalytic authenticity and tactical authenticity. Both sets of measures reflect some of the challenges experienced in undertaking this research, where gaining access to participants both in policing and in communities required articulate answers to participants' questions across trustworthiness and authenticity. In particular, transferability, confirmability and tactical authenticity were queried by gatekeepers and participants alike. This experience in the field emphasised the importance of the transparency of the work and the need to ensure that the findings will make an impact for both the case study area and policing policy and practice more broadly.

### **The Sample**

This case study is based on field research in a large county in the Midlands region of England, which included semi-structured interviews and focus groups undertaken between

2014 and 2015. 78 people participated in the study, comprising 31 interviews with police officers, 32 interviews with faith community members and three focus groups with 15 Muslim and Hindu women. Of the police officers who took part, 16 were frontline officers and Sergeants, eight were Inspectors and seven were Chief Inspector and above. 20 participants were male police officers and 11 were female and their ages ranged from 18 to 65, although the majority were in the age brackets 35-44 and 45-54. Of the interviews with members of faith communities, eight were Christian and eight were Muslim, and the remaining participants were spread across faiths: Baha'i (3), Hindu (3), Jewish (5), Sikh (3) and Quaker (1). One participant described themselves as 'Atheist' and participated due to connections with faith-based third sector initiatives. 19 participants from faith communities were male and 13 were female and their ages ranged from 18 to 66. Greater ethnic diversity was achieved in the sample of faith community members, with there being 19 white British and 13 black and minority ethnic participants compared to 25 white British police officers and 6 from black and minority ethnic backgrounds.

Gaining access to the sample of police officers was facilitated by the endorsement of this study through a Bramshill Fellowship with the National Police Improvement Agency, now the College of Policing, which encouraged support from the local Police Authority, now the Police and Crime Commissioner. This support provided privileged access to police participants following approval of the research objectives and methods from the Chief Constable. Having worked for the police force for six years before moving to the office of the Police and Crime Commissioner for a further three years, I undertook this research with a considerable number of contacts throughout the rank structure. I was therefore able to identify colleagues to invite to participate and to encourage them to pass invitations on. This study therefore used both 'purposive' sampling and 'snowball' sampling, for these interviews, ensuring that those who participated were relevant to the research questions and able to provide the most insight (Miles and Huberman, 1994; Cohen and Ebrary, 2000). This included police officers who have played a role in interpreting or implementing policies



in relation to faith community engagement and counter-terrorism, from Assistant Chief Constable through to Police Community Support Officer.

My role within the Office of the Police and Crime Commissioner involved oversight of community safety grants, which provided funding to build the skills and sustainability of faith and community groups to deliver crime prevention activity. Through this role, and previous community engagement activities in my role with the local Police Service, I have maintained relationships and developed new relationships across the faith 'sector' in the case study area in recent years. Access to potential participants across faith communities was therefore facilitated by a few key contacts, often described as 'faith community leaders'. The most prevalent faith groups in the county are Christian, Muslim, Hindu, Sikh and Jewish (Census, 2011) and I was in contact with a handful of 'leaders' across these groups. This approach is described as 'convenience sampling', which is a nonprobability sampling technique where participants are selected because of their convenient accessibility to the researcher (Maxfield and Babbie, 2009). I was also made aware of the growing Baha'i community after meeting a Baha'i woman at a police community engagement event. Beyond these initial known contacts, the study employed a 'snowball' sampling approach to encourage participation across faith groups. I attended numerous police community engagement events, Interfaith Forum meetings, faith community group social events and local meetings and was invited along to prayer groups, readings and celebrations. I spent approximately 50 hours engaging with faith groups, building relationships and contacts across communities.

The approach to accessing the sample was described above, explaining the use of 'convenience' sampling and 'snowball' sampling to building connections with members of various faith communities across the case study area. The 'self-selecting' effect of snowball sampling and placing the responsibility of identification of appropriate participation on the participants themselves presents methodological challenges in terms of external validity and replication of the study. However, the intention was to employ a qualitative framework

that would facilitate the development of knowledge through generating rich insight into police-faith relations in an everyday town. The focus is therefore less on matching sampling approaches and more so on developing theory and concepts that can be considered in other contexts. Defining an individual 'of faith' or a 'faith community' is reflected upon in the first chapter, in particular the challenges about labelling and grouping individuals where social identity changes with context and the intersectionality of identity means the perceived relevance or importance of aspects of identity also change with context (Winker and Degele, 2011; Jenkins, 2008). Bourdieu (1990) suggests 'if we try to impose concepts that are too straight-edged on this messy reality we risk divorcing ourselves from it, substituting the "reality of the model" for a "model of reality"' (Bourdieu, 1990:39). Measuring religiosity is difficult due to the different dimensions that faith and practice can take and models and typologies arguably do as Bourdieu suggests, minimising faith and religion into distinctions between belonging, behaving and believing (Nicolet and Tresch, 2009) or 'the religious', 'the fuzzy faithful' and 'the unreligious' (British Social Attitudes Survey, 26<sup>th</sup> Report, 2010). In line with the axiology of the interpretive paradigm, this study valued the voices of those wishing to be participants (Ortner, 2003) and therefore did not request participation based on an assessment of religious activity. This meant that faith groups beyond those identified in the Census participated, Baha'is and Quakers, and an Atheist also took part having heard about the research through engagement with faith-based organisations.

The sampling approach also ensured that interviews were conducted with both 'faith community leaders' and with members of faith communities who had little or no regular contact with policing through formal routes. Concerns have been raised about research methods which fail to get beyond the 'loudest voices' in communities and involve diverse or 'hidden' groups within communities (Spalek, 2008). It is recognised that research itself, as a social process, can reinforce the reification of groups in social analysis (Brubaker, 2003) causing the distinct experiences of individuals and communities who may hold specific or multiple identities to 'remain invisible, obscured or diluted' (Spalek, 2008:37). However,

this examination of police-faith relations required insight across groups who are routinely engaged in policing and those who might be peripheral to police engagement approaches. The distinct perceptions and experiences between the more engaged 'leaders' and the perhaps less engaged 'members' is important to building understanding about the holistic picture of police-faith relations. The efforts of this study to include minority groups such as the Baha'is, Quakers and Sikhs, demonstrates a rejection of the reification of majority social groups and provided 'voice' to groups previously under-researched in policing.

### **Research Methods in Practice**

The case study method seeks to build understanding through developing a sense of collective experience through different viewpoints (Forsey, 2010). There are 'fuzzy semantic boundaries' between ethnography, qualitative inquiry and case study approaches and methods in research (Atkinson and Hammersley, 2007:1) and this study demonstrates those. However, this research benefits from the case study approach to data gathering, collection and analysis, where pluralism, subjectivity and relativism create a mode of inquiry that is contextual and exploratory and could provide rich and descriptive accounts of phenomena (Tracy, 2013). Yin (2003:13) defines a case study as 'an empirical inquiry that investigates a contemporary phenomenon within its real-life context, especially when the boundaries between phenomenon and context are not clearly evident.' This case study allowed the researcher access to those who have in-depth knowledge appropriate to the area of study, in a live context. The exploration of the social processes between policing and faith communities in the study area provides a rich account of the factors, perceptions and experiences at play in the construct of police-faith relations.

Semi-structured interviews were used to allow open-ended questions around which the interviewee could share the information they perceived to be important to the topic, essentially enabling them to structure and re-structure the interview process (Rubin and Rubin, 2005). In Husband and Alam's research (2011) they emphasis the benefits of

interviews, in particular the 'span' of a qualitative interview during which the interviewee can 'develop a coherent position and show the linkages between the elements in their comments, and indeed develop contradictory positions not routinely allowed for in quantitative techniques' (Husband and Alam, 2011:9). This enables the researcher to better understand the meanings attached to particular statements which may in isolation be less clear. The main caveat to qualitative interviewing tends to be the distinction between what people say they do and what they actually do in practice (Scott and Morrison, 2007). This is arguably a benefit for research projects seeking to explore these types of distinctions and contradictions, rather than seeing interview material as an unreliable account situated in a moment of time (Yanow, 2014; Freebody, 2003). This research aimed to build understanding of relationships between police officers and faith community leaders and members, based on their perceptions and experiences. An important aspect to this research is the comparison between what police officers say they do (Chapter Six) and what faith communities perceive them to do (Chapter Seven), and vice versa. In this respect, the research is directly addressing contradictions between what is said to happen and experiences of what actually happens.

Whilst interviews were the method used for the vast majority of data collection, three focus groups were undertaken with Muslim and Hindu women, at their request. The focus group as a research method offers the opportunity to explore in-depth understandings of perceptions, opinions and the ways in which 'people make meaning of a variety of aspects of their lives' (Levers, 2005:381). In this sense, the researcher can study the ways in which individuals collectively make sense of phenomenon and construct meanings around it, reflecting the processes through which meaning is constructed in everyday life (Yanow, 2014; Wilkinson, 1998). The probing and questioning between participants was particularly beneficial to encourage participation across all individuals and to generate rich explanations of perceptions and experiences (Bryman, 2004). A delicate balance of facilitator prompts, questions and control of the topics was needed, to ensure that dominant speakers and 'group effects' were controlled (Krueger, 1998). The data gathered

from the focus groups complemented and contributed to the interviews undertaken with faith community members.

The following two sections discuss the practical experience of undertaking interviews with police officers and faith communities, reflecting on participant behaviour and techniques to maximise the quality of data collected.

### *Interviews with police officers*

There are a variety of roles in the police service which have relevance to community engagement with faith communities, including community policing, counter-terrorism and hate crime specialists for example, which involve officers across the rank structure. The senior police leaders, Chief Inspector through to Assistant Chief Constable, play a significant role in interpreting national policy, developing strategy and planning, aligning resources to priorities and providing leadership. The 'middle management' Inspectors are responsible for the implementation of those decisions and management of staff. 'Frontline officers', including Sergeants, police officers and Police Community Support Officers, are often the 'face' of police delivery, running initiatives or operations, responding to incidents and engaging with the public. Interview schedules therefore differed slightly between these three categories, aligning with questions and themes to areas of responsibility.

Despite the voluntary nature of the interviews conducted with police officers, it was evident in practice that a small number of participants who had been encouraged to participate demonstrated limited interest in the topic at the beginning of the interview. In all of these cases I was able to use information they shared with me to build their interest, focusing on flippancy comments made about difficulties or annoyances in role for example. More challenging than disinterest was the small proportion who presented a defensive and skeptical demeanor. As noted earlier, my role with the Office for Police and Crime Commissioner (OPCC) was a point of conflict for some, identifying me as part of the scrutiny

and accountability responsibilities of the OPCC. At the beginning of each interview I explained my role and the distinction between this research project and the methods through which the PCC undertakes scrutiny. This settled the majority of participants, but for a small number it took around half an hour to begin to move beyond responses to questions which provided 'reassuring' statements about police activity, resourcing or plans. Those moments reminded me of interview responses during inspection visits from Her Majesty's Inspectorate of Constabularies (HMIC), where participants present the best possible picture of their activities and plans in order to illicit a positive response from the Inspector. However, building rapport and stimulating discussion around the interview questions was effective in moving beyond 'textbook' answers and exploring reflections, insights and perceptions. Interviewing technique was therefore critical in the police interviews, particularly in terms of encouraging participants to feel comfortable, able to share perceptions and experiences and easing them in to using examples and providing in-depth responses (Britten, 1994).

During the organisation of interviews with police officers across ranks, despite sharing the participant information sheet prior to setting up the interview, officers and staff would often reinterpret the information to mean 'researching BME communities'. I received meeting requests entitled 'BME research', 'faith and culture interview' and 'community engagement review', amongst others. Officers met me with greetings including 'you're here to talk about the Muslim community right?', 'this is about community engagement', 'perhaps you should just speak to the PCSOs if this is about what we know about engaging BME groups' and 'we don't have any temples or Mosques on our patch so why don't you talk to Central sector?'. This often served to immediately narrow the focus of the interview into a specific framework that participants seemed more familiar and comfortable with. During the interviews, when asked about engagement or knowledge of faith groups or communities, officers would use faith, ethnicity and country of origin interchangeably in their responses, referring to engagement with the 'Muslim community', 'Asians' and the 'Eastern Europeans', for example. Understanding of different communities appeared to be

distinguished into two categories: white-British communities and 'the rest', which included all black and minority ethnic groups, all non-Christian faiths and all non-British origins. This made distinguishing the attitudes, behaviours, skills, experience, understanding, activities and approaches to policing faith communities in particular, quite difficult. The policing of Muslim communities was an exception, where very specific details were provided regarding policing approaches, reflecting the literature explored in Chapters Two and Three. This study reinforces the research and practice challenges raised in correctly identifying and recording the experiences of faith groups (Perry, 2009) and responding to the 'specificities of experience' between individuals, groups and communities within communities (Garland, Spalek and Chakraborti, 2006). Through carefully worded probing I was able to encourage distinction between groups and gradually re-shifted the focus of responses specifically towards faith communities. This processes tended to encourage active reflection during the interview, recognising and describing differences between approaches towards race, religion and culture in policing, or specifically between racial or religious groups.

For several police participants the interview appeared to provide an opportunity of cathartic release, as is evident in many qualitative studies (Borbasi *et al.*, 2005; Chew-Graham *et al.*, 2002; Cieurzo and Keital, 1999) and those interviews tended to last considerably longer than the average one-hour discussion. In these interviews, trust was built extremely quickly and the provision of rich, detailed experiences was easily facilitated, exploring issues in police-faith relations which had caused significant frustration and upset often over years in policing. Typically, these participants presented me with many questions, demonstrating interest or concern about how the research might be used to influence policy and practice and how it might help to shed light on the issues raised. My opinions about 'what next' appeared to render me the expert or the authority on the topic, which is often described negatively in literature regarding qualitative research methods as it may serve to hinder participants willingness to share their views. However, these perceptions tended to be made clear at the end of interviews during which the need to probe participants was minimal and their perceptions of me did not seem to affect their

willingness to share. Instead this became a positive researcher-participant relationship which felt democratic, recognizing the authority of personal experience of an issue and wider knowledge of an issue as equal contributions to the assessment of police-faith relations. These situations also led to less abrupt relationships, whereby participants kept in touch, sharing information about faith-related events and opportunities to meet other interested individuals.

### *Interviews with faith communities*

Engaging with faith communities in the case study area was important to encourage participation in the research across groups, but also to develop researcher understanding of faith communities in the area. As mentioned earlier, my employment in policing meant that I attended a number of Independent Advisory Groups (IAG) in the years prior to, and for the duration of, this research project. IAGs bring together members of the public with police officers to discuss the impact of policing approaches on communities, or to share insights about community culture, issues or concerns to inform the design of policing initiatives. IAGs have been considered fundamental to police-community relations surrounding issues relating to diversity or marginalised groups since the death of Stephen Lawrence (Reiner, 2010). My experience of attending IAGs provided knowledge about the representation of faith groups at the meetings, key issues which may have impacted on confidence in policing in recent years and enabled me to see first-hand the actions, behaviours and dialogue between police officers and faith community members in the IAG setting. These activities produce institutional facts and are indicators of 'social organisation', which can provide important insights into culture, practice and routine which is socially constructed (Campbell and Gregor, 2002). For example, the attendance of both police community engagement officers and 'regular' police officers also allowed me to see the different interactions between faith community members with different roles or individuals in policing. This was particularly beneficial to developing the interview schedule



and specific probes to address these distinctions and encourage participants to share detailed examples of interactions in these settings.

I have also been able to attend a number of public meetings over the course of this research study which have involved police officers and faith communities, for example annual county-wide police-faith engagement meetings, 'Interfaith Forum' meetings and several faith community events which have involved police attendance. In addition to these, I was privileged to attend several 'invite-only' community events, for example prayer readings in people's homes, women's activity groups, playgroups and celebrations. Through this engagement with faith communities I was invited by the Northampton Interfaith Forum to Chair a public debate entitled 'The Media: Religion's Friend or Foe?' because I was seen to be independent, because I was familiar to many local people which encouraged participants to speak and because my connection with research in the area was viewed as a positive contribution to the debate. The positive engagement and feedback from individuals in attendance provided me with some reassurance that my involvement in the local faith community 'scene' had been positively received by individuals across faith groups. Overall, my relationships with some members of faith communities and my engagement with various groups through events provided familiarity which facilitated my validation and ability to build trust with participants (Johnsson, *et al.*, 2012).

The vast majority of interviews took place in people's homes and on average I spent between one and two hours with them. The risks of this approach are discussed later in the chapter, but in practice I found the intimacy of being invited into people's homes facilitated rapid trust-building and allowed participants to relax quickly also. Accepting drinks, food, sharing lunch together or sharing transport were all methods through which I sought to build relationships and trust and are recognised to be important in qualitative research (Sinding, 2003). A small number of interviews were carried out in quiet cafes, at the request of the participants. This did not affect the quality of the interview, as they were audio-recorded and generally we were the only customers present. The interviews explored

knowledge of local policing, contact with and experience of policing, faith-related concerns relating to policing approaches or safety and broader expectations and engagement with policing. Discussions varied from detailed accounts of experiences through to philosophical reflections about the role of faith in society and public safety.

Ten of the participants across faith communities were deemed 'faith community leaders' by police community engagement officers, according to lists of 'key individual networks' and by third sector agencies and charities engaged with communities. As is described in the findings in Chapter Seven, the label was not often used or assigned by the individuals themselves. These interviews explored their perceptions of 'community leader' roles, the impact of this status in their relationship with the police and the roles, responsibilities and implications of this identity status on their relationships within communities. For several individuals the question 'do you describe yourself as a community leader?' evoked defensive responses which suggested participants felt a sense of judgement or bias on my part. I was surprised by participants exhibiting embarrassment, awkwardness and appearing to feel a sense of directness in the question which caused them to feel uncomfortable. It was necessary to reassure participants and to rebuild their perception of the interview question as genuinely objective. Maintaining a neutral position during qualitative interviewing can be challenging but is important to ensuring the participant does not feel criticised based on their views (Pryke, 2004). This generated insightful reflection and contributes new findings in relation to 'community leaders' both as conduits between communities and authorities and the judgement that may be experienced in wider society, as discussed in Chapter Seven.

During engagement with community groups it became apparent that some women would preferred to meet with me in the company of others, or for ease of enabling greater participation across their friends and neighbours, preferred to invite me to an existing arranged event. Whilst interviews were designed to be the main method for data collection, the ability to involve further women was beneficial to the study and provided an

opportunity for those to participate who were not willing to be interviewed. Three focus groups were therefore held with Hindu and Muslim women. The focus groups were undertaken in locations which provided the comfort and security of familiarity, ensuring a 'non-threatening' environment (Krueger, 1994). One of the main benefits of the focus groups was the contribution of voluntary language translation. Across all groups one or two participants offered to translate, which enabled greater reach for the study and supported the involvement of women who are less likely to have their voices heard through consultation (Spalek, 2008; Dunbar, 2006). One of the drawbacks of voluntary translation is the risk of misrepresentation (Chesney, 1998), but the benefits of increased reach and the participation of those who wanted to share their views through their friends and fellow community members outweighed this risk. Focus groups are often perceived to be an efficient and flexible method through which a substantive amount of content can be expressed, including verbal opinions and experiences and observations of interactions between the participants (Berg, 2001; Levers, 2005). This was experienced in the focus groups conducted with both Hindu and Muslim women, where stories of personal experience of faith hate victimisation prompted other participants to share stories or details that may not have been shared during interviews.

### **Ethical Considerations**

Participation in this study was fully informed and voluntary for both police officers and faith communities. Police officers may have felt a duty to participate due to the support for the research from the Chief Constable and where senior police leaders have "authorised" the interviews (Fontana and Frey, 2005; Cohen *et al.*, 2000). However, the information sheets and consent forms were shared with police officers before the research interview and individuals were reminded that participation was voluntary during discussion and in the context of signing the consent form. For the interviews and focus groups with faith community leaders and members, information sheets and consent forms were only shared prior to the interview on a few occasions where email addresses were provided for

communication. Translation in the focus groups with Hindu and Muslim women ensured that all participants were informed about their participation being voluntary. Except for the focus groups, I was able to meet with the majority of interviewees, or discuss on the phone, the research objectives, my role and what participation would entail prior to the interview session. This was important to provide a sense of integrity of the research and to ensure participants understood their role and voluntary participation, avoiding any possibility of generating feelings of manipulation or exploitation (Silverman, 2005). The perception of power of the researcher (Rubin and Rubin 2005) can easily blur the lines of voluntary participation, particularly where the research is connected to an authority such as policing.

In order to ensure that the interviews and focus groups provided open and honest responses there was a need to guarantee the anonymity of the participants. This was particularly important to the senior and specialist roles within the police and the 'community leader' roles in the faith communities, where so few positions and roles meant that the possibility of their being individually identified through the data is potentially high. This was not a concern that appeared to affect participation either in policing or faith communities, although on a few occasions participants checked or asked me to confirm anonymity before sharing particularly sensitive or detailed information. All interviews were audio-recorded with the exception of two interviews with faith community members and one of the focus groups. This was due to participants feeling uncomfortable with recording but were happy for me to take notes. Distrust of the police and concerns about making statements which might be used out of context appeared to be the main reasons for this discomfort.

Spending time with faith communities at events, celebrations and community meetings was an enjoyable and important part of this research project. Developing relationships with participants and their communities facilitated my understanding of the ways in which their communities interacted with policing services and with each other about issues of safety. I therefore attended numerous meetings at various times of the day and days of the week

across the county. Inevitably this meant that on occasions I walked alone after dark to find community meeting rooms or people's homes. The majority of interviews with faith community members were also undertaken in their homes. Elements of risk to safety were therefore heightened beyond my normal daily routine, although I shared my research locations and times with colleagues to ensure my whereabouts was known. At no point during the research did I feel at risk, due to the positive relationships I had developed with community members.

### **Insider/Outsider Researcher Status**

One of the main criticisms of qualitative research is that it can be too impressionistic, subjective and the close personal relationship that can occur between researcher and participants leads to the researcher developing unsystematic perceptions of what is significant and important (Bryman, 2004). A good quality study, according to Rawlings (2004), requires 'an emotional balancing act where the researcher gets close enough to understand phenomenon from the perspectives of participants but without getting completely caught up in the need for action rather than reflection' (Rawlings, 2004:139). Achieving this balancing act becomes more complex when the researcher shares aspects of identity, experience or context with the participants or issue under examination. Being an 'insider' researcher is considered to have many benefits to qualitative research, particularly in terms of gaining access to participants and having a greater awareness and understanding of patterns of social interaction and key issues (Zempi and Chakraborti, 2014). However, having an 'outsider status' can also be beneficial for participants who may feel that a researcher sharing aspects of their identity might be judgemental about their values or opinions (Tinker and Armstrong, 2008). These viewpoints and related issues played out very differently between the two groups of participants in this study, where in the context of this research, one group's shared identity was their occupation as police officers and the other group's shared identity was having a faith.

Whilst it is evident that I am not a police officer, my role in the Police as a staff member in research, analysis and policy roles within the Corporate Development department over six years meant I could be considered an 'insider' in some respects. Having an inside understanding of the organisation, the context and some of the issues and challenges in policing facilitated rapport-building and credibility in many interviews. Equally, there may have been participants that perceived me to be naive to the issues of frontline policing and lacking understanding of how policing 'really works'. However, the majority of interviews, particularly with participants known to me, statements such as 'you know how it is' and 'you've seen it' were made at various points. This required additional probing to ensure participants fully explained their points without presumptions that implicit meanings would be drawn out due to my 'insider' knowledge. It quickly became apparent that the key risk regarding my insider status was actually related to my current role with the Police and Crime Commissioner. Some participants explicitly or implicitly did not want to share some information or experiences with the PCC's office, due to their governing responsibilities over the police. I was able to provide enough reassurance of confidentiality to encourage full participation in the interviews, although any information, experiences or views that were held back due to my researcher status are unknown. However, in six of the 31 interviews with police officers, participants visibly relaxed once the audio recorder was switched off and proceeded to share further stories to demonstrate their viewpoints. In one situation I felt able to request that I put the recorder back on because very helpful material was being shared and this was approved. In the remaining five situations in which this happened, I chose to maintain the rapport I had built with the participant and have not included this additional material in the study. Reflecting back on the stories shared, the main points elicited are reflected in the overall themes shared in the following chapter.

I am not a member of any faith group or faith-related community or organisation, which effectively categorised me as an 'outsider researcher' in relation to participants from faith communities. Outsider status can mean that participants themselves or gatekeepers to potential participants can create barriers to access, which can be fuelled by worry about

scrutiny from those with minimal understanding of their group or community (Shah, 2004). However, the researcher did not belong to any one of the faith groups that participated in this study, arguably facilitating an equal critical distance between the researcher and each of the groups involved. Insider status with one of the seven faith groups involved may have created further complexity regarding participant perceptions of the researcher understanding their specific group. Although, my status as white British places me in the dominant ethnic group which may have rendered me 'part of the problem' particularly in relation to discussions about secularism, cultural awareness in policing and marginalisation. Issues of power and perceptions of powerful, privileged positions in society can hinder the ability of the researcher to build rapport with participants or to reflect on the researching findings without bias (Seibold, 2000). In addition to racial identity, gender identity can also play a role and may be an opportunity to build rapport with female participants where racial and religious identity may differ (Zempi and Chakraborti, 2014; Spalek, 2002). This became relevant in this study in several interviews, more so with members of faith communities than police officers, and particularly so in generating opportunities to undertake focus groups with Hindu and Muslim women. Engagement with local Imams was also quite challenging and I was offered the opportunity to bring along a male police officer to facilitate one of the meetings. This did not transpire, as interviews in public cafes provided the opportunity to overcome this issue.

In practice, I experienced very little resistance to participation in the study from members of faith communities. Firstly, my roles with the police and the Police and Crime Commissioner meant that I had already established relationships with a number of gatekeepers and faith 'community leaders'. These individuals play a significant role in validating or rejecting identities and can be critical to researcher success (Keval, 2009). My employed roles had always enabled me to play the role of advocate of communities and victims, acting as a conduit for sharing information and feedback through public meetings and consultation groups. Similar to the experience of Zempi and Chakraborti (2014) in their study of the victimisation of veiled Muslim women, engagement with local faith-based

organisations partially validated my identity and gave the 'green light' for some people to participate (Zempi and Chakraborti, 2014:42). With several participants I had established a position which was never defensive about policing approaches, resources or the impact of police decisions on communities. This was key to the development of relationships with several faith community leaders over the years prior to this study. Their approval of my research and access to community meetings, events and celebrations meant that I was able to spend time getting to know members of their communities.

For a few participants within faith communities, my status as having no faith caused curiosity regarding my purpose and led to questions such as 'so why do you care?' and 'why are you doing this?'. This is where my 'insider' status with the police became important, having worked in the field of policing for nearly a decade at the point of undertaking this research, I felt a genuine personal commitment to contribute to improving police-community relationships. Talking about my role in Independent Advisory Groups, facilitating public consultation meetings, undertaking research with victims of crime and seeing changes within the police service, tended to encourage participants to feel at ease with my underlying ambition. This became slightly more difficult when participants requested to hear my views about issues and asked for my opinions on their views, which required a complex balance of maintaining rapport whilst limiting researcher bias. Turning these situations into ones where I was able to bring in topics or issues that I had little knowledge about, encouraged participants to feel authoritative and to describe their perceptions or experiences in detail (Fielding, 2009).

Morant and Warren (2004:144) suggest the 'processes and functions of research at interpersonal, organisational and socio-political levels' mean that researchers may be required to play strategic roles in developing relationships. Manning (1979) argues that research can provide a 'cultural bridge' between new ideas and the more mainstream professional establishment that holds the balance of power in distribution of resources and shaping of the cultural landscape. In this sense, researchers may find themselves acting as



ambassadors for their cause or their participants and organisations in their interactions with academics, policy makers and practitioners. This is particularly pertinent to the position I brought to this research, where I played a role as advocate of victims and communities in the office of the Police and Crime Commissioner. Where this research with faith communities raises experiences of faith hate crime, broader victimisation and difficulty accessing or wishing to access police and support services, I found it very challenging not to get 'caught up in the need for action rather than reflection' (Rawlings, 2004:139).

### **Grounded Theory Analysis**

Avoiding bias and achieving external validity and reliability are key issues when undertaking research in a context which is very familiar to the researcher and with a sample of participants where the researcher has some professional relationships (Rolfe, 2006). The grounded theory method (Glaser, 1978; Glaser and Strauss, 1967; Strauss and Corbin, 1990) is the most common approach to data analysis which involves the rigorous use of tools to ensure the connection between the data collected and theory developed' (Bryman, 2004:273). This method was chosen to provide a rigorous and reliable approach to data collection and analysis, which guarded against the risks of bias in interpretation of the data. Churchill (2005) describes the data analysis approach in phenomenology as a 'co-experience' between the researcher and participant, which enables data to be imagined and experienced (Churchill, 2005:90). My knowledge of the case study area, of previous and current policing approaches and key individuals involved in community policing and faith-based organisations facilitated this 'co-experience' and encouraged participants to share information.

The understanding that reality is socially constructed underlies grounded theorists' commitment to examining social processes and changes over time (Morse and Richards, 2002) and supports the view that reality is negotiated between people and is constantly evolving (Bryman, 2004), making this method pertinent to the aims of this research.

Grounded theory studies reflect this emphasis on social processes and experiences through the rigorous methods they use. The beginning of data collection denotes the beginning of data analysis; simultaneous involvement in these processes means that emerging themes and concepts can become a part of subsequent data collection (Charmaz, 2003). This means that the research does not begin with a theory to be tested, but an area of study whereby emerging phenomena dictate the direction and focus of the study. 'The two procedures cross-pollinate, contributing to an emergent explanation, which may eventually contribute to broader theory' (Frost, 2004:193).

The challenge in undertaking interviews, focus groups and the subsequent analysis of the data collected was achieving and maintaining the appropriate distance, getting close enough to the participants' views and experiences without biasing the findings (Rawlings, 2004). Silverman (2005) describes this bias as anecdotalism, focussing on the experiences of the few due to the connection made between the researcher and participant. The conceptualisation of relations among units of text to produce codes, among codes to produce categories, and among categories to produce higher order categories is referred to as 'constant comparative analysis' (Rennie, 2005:64). The use of the 'constant comparative method' is considered an important strategy to avoid bias in qualitative data analysis (Silverman, 2005).

The qualitative analysis software package NVivo 9 was used to code the data in the transcripts, using the systematic method of data analysis unique to grounded theory, which encourages a continuous search not only for new ideas and concepts in the data, but evidence of previous findings. Manual coding at each level of analysis maintains this process; 'in vivo', or 'open' coding is the first stage which serves to open up the text through labelling, in present tense, what is happening in each line of the transcript. Whilst this was an arduous task, the process of coding each line or each couple of lines of transcript enabled me to give phenomena labels using words used by the participants themselves in 'an attempt to maintain the semantics of the data' (Holmberg and Wahlberg, 2000:232) and

ensure emic, rather than etic, meanings evolve. Coding the text by short passages rather than line by line has been described as coding 'meaning units' which 'hang together' in terms of their themes, ensuring the overall points raised by participants are not lost (Rennie *et al.*, 1988:67). Across approximately 70 hours' worth of material, this process led to nearly 200 labels, including for example 'assumptions about beliefs', 'challenging decisions', 'faith bubble', 'building trust' and 'policing by consent'. These codes were rarely just one word, most commonly two or three, and tended to reflect actions and thoughts in the present tense.

Whilst the vast majority of labels differed between the transcripts of data from police officers to faith communities, approximately 10 per cent of labels overlapped, such as 'police culture', 'us and them', 'international incidents' and 'diversity in policing'. No new labels were created after the 11<sup>th</sup> interview with police officers (out of 31) and the 18<sup>th</sup> interview with faith community members (out of 32). This demonstrates the strength of similarities in the language, perceptions and experiences across the case study area, particularly for police officers.

The 'axial coding' process brought the total number of labels down by generating and managing codes across transcripts; taking two codes and comparing them for similarities and differences within the sociocultural context of the phenomenon (Glaser and Strauss, 1967). This process is called 'selective coding' through which relating axial codes are collated to form cluster codes, which provided an opportunity to specify the dimensions of each emerging concept, thus verifying the origins of each concept in the data (Charmaz, 2003). The overall meaning of the cluster is then conceptualised and this conceptualisation is declared a category. 13 categories were generated from the data collected from police officers and 19 were generated from faith community members. The resulting theory and concepts are therefore likely to be empirically valid because a level of validation is performed implicitly by constant comparison and questioning of the data from the start of the process (Berg, 2007). Examples of these categories include 'vulnerability and

victimisation', 'keeping faith low key' and 'cultural awareness'. These categories were then reconceptualised into broad themes across police officers and faith communities' perceptions and experiences of police-faith relations, which are discussed in the following chapters.

Within the grounded theory method, data collection and analysis proceed concurrently and are interactive, whereby the emergent understanding of the data as the analysis proceeds informs further sources for data collections, which is described as theoretical sampling (Glaser and Strauss, 1967). When the new data appear to add little to the understanding of the phenomenon within the context in which it is being analysed, a saturation point is reached and data collection ceases. In practice, it was difficult to align this aspect of the method with the objectives of this study. As mentioned earlier, it could be argued that theoretical saturation was achieved after 11 interviews with police officers and 18 interviews with faith community members because from this point no new labels were generated. However, it was not possible to predict this, because the sample needed representatives from across the rank structure in policing and across faith groups in the community. Therefore, snowball sampling continued until representatives of each group, described above, participated. The analysis pulls out differences between small groups of participants, for example senior officers compared to frontline officers and faith community 'leaders' compared to community members.

## **Conclusion**

The case study approach presented here demonstrates how the themes of identity, intersectionality, procedural justice and legitimacy have been explored through the study of the social processes and social construction of police-faith relations. This interpretive study pulls together rich, insightful data from both policing and faith communities to provide a thematic assessment of the issues and factors at play. The sample of participants involved in the study provides new material to the field of criminological examination of

police-faith relations. Yielding rich data from various faith communities, the research includes minority faith groups such as Baha'is and the more visible 'faith community leaders' across the major faith groups. Subjectivities of the researcher were considered, particularly in relation to insider/outsider status and the impact of employment in policing on participation and bias. The rigorous grounded theory approach to analysis of data collected has produced two chapters of the case study findings: Chapter Six explores the themes generated from police interviews and Chapter Seven presents the findings from interviews with faith communities. The two findings chapters are brought together in discussion of the overarching implications of this research for policing policy and practice in Chapter Eight.

## **Chapter Six**

### **Police Perspectives of Relationships with Faith Communities**

#### **Introduction**

The exploration of police-faith relations through review of academic literature in the previous chapters has brought focus to themes and concepts of identity, intersectionality of experience, procedural justice, legitimacy and equality in policing. Ever-changing issues of multiculturalism, religious extremism and faith hate crime create complex challenges for policing faith communities. This study seeks to address these issues and challenges, firstly by exploring the perceptions and experiences of police officers, discussed in this chapter, and secondly hearing from members of faith communities, discussed in Chapter Seven.

Through semi-structured interviews with thirty-one police officers and staff, ranging in rank and role from PCSO to Assistant Chief Constable, four overarching themes became apparent. Firstly, policing is still not 'doing difference' and the prevailing culture within policing remains resistant to diversity and change. Secondly, policing is increasingly valuing enforcement over engagement activity which renders community relationships a lower priority for already stretched resources. Thirdly, the disproportionate policing of faith communities threatens perceptions of procedural justice and equality in police-faith relationships. Finally, legitimacy continues to be perceived as an important founding principle and value in policing, but is challenged by both policy and cultural issues, which is particularly impactful on police-faith relations in a context of increasing diversity in communities.

#### **Policing Still isn't 'Doing Difference'**

The phrase 'doing difference' (Perry, 2001) was indirectly referenced by several participants in describing the overall culture of policing, for example stating 'policing doesn't do

diversity', 'we don't do faith here' and 'we don't invite difference very well'. Themes of cultural awareness, confidence and the skills of 'young in service' officers were raised through exploration of police-faith relations, bringing concepts of identity in policing to the fore. Some participants held simplistic views, suggesting that faith is not an important aspect of identity in the delivery of policing services. They felt that interpersonal and communication skills, and following the Code of Ethics (College of Policing, 2014), facilitate positive relationships with any member of the public regardless of identity. Others recognised a more complex role of identity in police-faith relations, particularly the poor recognition or marginalisation of some faith groups both externally in communities and internally within policing itself. This latter point was described with examples of the prevailing white British and Christian profile of the police service, characterised by the 'old boys network' and exacerbated by the 'in-group' of police officers who support policing 'as it's always been done' (Cosgrove, 2016). These themes and the views, experiences and stories shared by participants will be explored in further detail and serve to demonstrate the significant impact of policing cultures on practice affecting relationships with faith communities.

### *Identity and intersectionality in 'doing difference'*

Across interviews with police officers faith was talked about interchangeably with ethnicity and country of origin. The consistency of language and phraseology used reflected typical institutional 'grouping' of people and communities, for example 'BME groups', 'Eastern Europeans', 'minorities' and 'Asians'. This reflects academic arguments about 'groupist' terms being used for ease of policy development and tick-box exercises, particularly where officers were describing their 'duty' to engage (Delanty, 2003:87; Brubaker, 2003). Recognising and understanding the specificity of perspectives and experiences beneath these broad-brush categories was only demonstrated by a small number of participants in roles dedicated to community engagement or intelligence. Reflecting other work in this field, this suggests continued misrecognition of communities within communities and

exacerbates issues of correctly identifying and recording the experiences of faith groups (Perry, 2009; Garland, Spalek and Chakraborti, 2006). However, whilst issues of language, grouping and categorisation were evident, there was much consensus across participants of the fundamental need for effective police-community relations. Themes of confidence and trust were evident and linked to the need to encourage reporting of crime and victimisation across faith groups in particular and to gathering information and intelligence, as reflected across literature describing community policing (Renauer, 2007; Skogan, 2005; Leigh *et al.*, 1998). The quotation below concisely presents the views echoed across participants and demonstrates the connection made between engagement with communities and core principles in policing:

*I think it's fundamental that if you want to police the communities that we police, the communities that we live in, if you know little or nothing about them then it's going to make it more difficult...Faith is a major concept in every country all over the world so it's not something we can just avoid.*

*Constable, G*

However, both individual and force-level knowledge of faith groups, customs and practices were largely considered to be very low, beyond two roles dedicated to community engagement and field intelligence officers. Participants in 'frontline' roles such as PCSOs and police constables tended to provide a simplistic understanding of the 'shoes off, head scarves on' rules, beyond which some questioned 'what else do I need to know?' Levels of knowledge and understanding of faith communities, faith-related events, customs, sensitivities and concerns were often considered within a framework of risk, reflecting concerns raised about simplifying police-faith relations to legal protection against identity discrimination (McFayden and Prideaux, 2014).

A distinction between the knowledge and confidence levels between police officers with more experience compared to those described as 'young in service' was apparent. The



practical 'experience of life' and the diversity of backgrounds of officers were described as key factors in their ability to remember important information about faith groups and to feel confident about approaching, engaging and dealing with faith-related issues. Furthermore, the fear of 'getting it wrong' and the potential ramifications of specific interactions appeared to be felt quite deeply by young-in-service officers:

*I think it does naturally make you a bit nervous because you don't want to go around upsetting people or annoying people or being accused of being a spy.*

*PCSO, B*

*If a police officer has joined quite young in the service from a middle class background somewhere and not had much dealings with other communities, faiths or religions they might not deal with it [well]...it's just lack of knowledge and understanding...It's quite worrying actually.*

*Constable, L*

The following two observations are illustrative of the role of the intersectionality of officers themselves in policing faith communities, recognising that aspects of identity can impact upon perceptions, experiences, confidence and values, which in turn impact on the skills and approaches used by officers to build rapport, confidence and legitimacy during their interactions. More broadly, the Sergeant in the latter quote below suggests that the recruitment process itself is producing new recruits with a narrow, defined collection of social identities which has ramifications for the diversity of the force as a whole and the ways in which communities identify with it:

*It comes with length of service...At least when I turn up I already have the age thing...Day one, scared as a rabbit, twenty years in, water off a duck's back.*

*Constable F*

*As the police service profile gets younger as it appears to be, we don't have some of the rounded experienced people because we have created a recruitment process now that has actually made our recruitment pooling incredibly narrow in terms of both diversity and experience.*

*Sergeant, Q*

In explaining the perceived limitations in confidence for some officers interacting with faith communities, the provision of training by the force was consistently described as 'limited'. Beyond the input for new recruits, which tends to involve at least one faith group representative, on-going and 'refresher' training was largely based on an online tutorial. This was considered to be an ill-matched tool for the nuanced content around diverse communities, sensitive issues, potential challenges and risks in engaging with specific communities. During discussions about the need for specific training, the national 'Code of Ethics – A Code of Practice for the Principles and Standards of Professional Behaviour for the Policing Profession of England and Wales' (College of Policing, 2014) was regularly referenced as the 'baseline' of knowledge in the treatment of people and communities. Whilst the majority recognised the need for increased knowledge and understanding across faith communities to contribute to tackling issues of confidence and legitimacy, the minority viewed the Code of Ethics as 'enough to get you by'. These conflicting views demonstrate increasing awareness about specific and multiple identities and communities, which are often diluted by the collective majority in public service design and delivery (Spalek, 2008). The following quotations demonstrate the level of feeling and frustration associated with the investment and delivery of training in this area:

*Oh I've had diversity training over the years I mean there was a big big push in the 1990s... I've probably done about twenty-five [online courses] and I don't think I've learned a thing 'cause it's an appalling system to try and teach people by.*

*Inspector, C*

*If they follow the Code of Ethics they should be able to do an okay standard job.*

*Chief Inspector, N*

Three types of impactful training and insight into faith communities were described. Firstly, officers with longer service remembered training delivered in the 1990s during increased financial investment in community engagement. Secondly, training was delivered under the government's counter-terrorism 'Prevent' policy and focussed on Muslim communities, which may have been more memorable due to the visible leadership and management attention to issues of equality and diversity (Reiner, 2010). Thirdly, one-to-one sessions with dedicated community engagement officers provided insights and approaches to engaging faith communities which were context-specific. However, it was evident that personal interest in diversity in cultures and communities was pivotal in assessments of helpful and impactful training.

Beyond age and length of service, gender was also identified as an aspect of identity which at times became an important factor in police-faith relations. A few participants talked about the heightened attention paid towards women recently in relation to faith, due to the national focus on tackling 'cultural and faith-related issues' such as female genital mutilation, forced marriage and honour-based violence. Participants shared mixed observations and experiences in this respect, some suggesting that gender-appropriate policing is required to manage sensitive situations and entrance to places of worship, whilst others suggested they are expected to 'just get on with it', not willing to share their nervousness with their superiors about being a woman attending a Mosque, for example:

*I think in recent months there's been more interest because of ISIS and Syria and the role that women have in [policing].*

*Constable, G*

*I think definitely as a female it was very difficult for me to go in and try and get the community links there and I do think that hindered what we could have had, relationship-wise, with them and it just made things a bit tense.*

*PCSO, B*

The issue of gender in police-faith relations was largely raised in relation to Muslim communities, although some reflected across other groups where dominant male community leaders and men in positions of authority were perceived to be more accommodating of men. The intersectionality of age and gender appeared to play a role in those situations, particularly where officers were also young-in-service and developing new skills in community engagement. The ethnicity, faith and cultural background of officers were also raised as factors in effective and trusting police-faith relations, but also as factors in the wider organisational cultures of policing. The following section focusses on faith in identity in relation to policing cultures and practice in 'doing difference'.

#### *The dominance of Christianity in policing*

In Chapter Two the theory of diversity in policing was discussed, presenting arguments about the need for the police service to represent the diverse cultural, religious, racial and ethnic backgrounds that build British communities (Reiner, 2010; Blair, 2005). The Scarman Report (1981) made the link between the need to increase recruitment from black and minority ethnic backgrounds to address racial prejudice in police officers, aid internal culture change and to build better relationships with diverse communities. Similar themes emerged within this study thirty-five years later, albeit with only one reference to overt racism by police officers. Participants without exception argued the need for more diversity in policing, recognising the very limited number of officers with faith beyond Christianity or from black or minority ethnic backgrounds. However, participants tended to caveat their responses with statements such as 'it can't be a numbers game', reasoning that necessary skills and experience were the main priority in recruitment. Both external and internal

challenges were identified as factors in the poor representation of diversity in policing. Several participants described the 'impossible' challenge of recruiting more officers representing faiths beyond Christianity or from diverse backgrounds due to the negative views of policing held by many whose country of origin is not Britain. It was argued that many black and minority ethnic individuals do not view policing as a profession or a career due to the corruption and negative experiences in other countries:

*Within the Asian culture they don't see police as a professional profession, they see doctors and dentists and they don't see policing. There's no 'oh my god it's Chief Inspector', they don't see that as any kudos.*

*Chief Inspector, N*

Some of the views of faith community members themselves reflect on this perception in Chapter Seven, but this description demonstrates some of the stereotyping undertaken in policing which may contribute to limiting progression in police diversity (McCloughlin, 2007; Commission for Racial Equality, 2005). A few examples, specifically relating to Muslim officers, appear to have fuelled this stereotyping:

*It's frowned upon by certain Muslims and sections of the Muslim community for one of them to become a police officer, [they are] not seen as a traitor but seen as one of 'them', the enemy almost. I know quite a few Muslim officers, regular officers and Specials who I work with very closely and they've all experienced problems and issues with that.*

*Constable, L*

*[Female officer] is getting quite a bit of hostility from her family due to the fact that she's become a Special because she's part of the police.*

*Constable, G*

Internal factors in the limited progression towards achieving a representative police service, and more broadly impacting on the culture of the police, included the identification of the force as a 'Christian institution'. The dominance of one faith in the police service was not an anticipated issue in this study, focussing on external police-faith relations. However, following the first five interviews referencing specific views on 'faith in force', a question around this was incorporated into the interview schedule to enable participants to build a wider picture. Three key issues were raised; the presence of a number of Christian leaders in the organisation; the prioritisation and pressure to attend Christian events and festivals; and the links between the Christian faith of force leaders and the 'old boy's network'. These three issues inherently create a relationship between faith in identity and 'fit' within the organisation. 'Fitting in' impacts directly on opportunities for development and promotion (Cosgrove, 2016) and more broadly on perpetuating a police service which does not value diversity and difference. These internal challenges were described in various ways as factors which both prevent the recruitment of people from diverse backgrounds and the development and progression of non-Christians already in policing. Some participants acknowledged progress on some of these issues, suggesting that the pressure to attend Christian festivals, for example, had reduced. However, the residual effects of previous regimes and approaches to leadership appear to have on-going implications on organisational culture. This is particularly prevalent in policing, where officers tend to complete full careers in policing and often in one force, which can mean that institutional cultures take significantly longer to dilute and change (Loftus, 2009; Marks, 2005). The comment below demonstrates the views of participants on these issues:

*[Chaplaincy] it's another example of us being a Christian organisation 'cause where's the other support groups that are out there? It's something that's been driven by the [senior leaders] including Chaplains in absolutely everything...they don't add any value, they come to our tasking meetings because Superintendents want the Chief to see on the minutes that the*

*Chaplains are involved...but again I think it sends out a message that we're interested in this one thing, one religion, one faith.* Inspector, J

The Chaplaincy service was another topic that was unexpected; described as an 'institution', for some this service symbolised the one-faith organisational culture which rejects difference and fuels the dominance of one group. Whilst different in terms of context, this reflects the literature discussed in previous chapters addressing the connections between 'in-groups', stereotyping, social advancement and resentment evident in experiences of 'community' (Clarke *et al.*, 2007). The Chaplaincy service almost acts as a 'concrete manifestation' and 'institution' which builds a sense of community but also risks resentment amongst 'out-groups' and potential resentment amongst the 'in-group' if it is forced to change (Husband and Allam, 2011; Clarke *et al.*, 2007). The depth of feeling in some participants' views of the Chaplaincy was surprising and indicates the level of impact and complexity of issues that have been created by the organisations focus on one faith. The following quotations demonstrate the perceived connections between the dominant faith in leaders, decision-making, organisational culture and ability to 'fit in':

*As [senior leader] is currently a strong believer in his faith you know the most important social event of the year is the Church service he organises at Christmas, expecting everybody to be there whether it's the right thing for them to do or not. You're expected to be seen there if you want to get promoted, I don't sign up to it unfortunately. I've got my beliefs, which are spending time with my family and not dancing to somebody else's song, but I think that's still the way the organisation is structured and I think you see that through the promotions and temporary operations that go on through the organisation. It's the same across the board isn't it - it's the white males that are willing to do eighteen hours a day and be seen at everything all day every-day and then go out for drinks with the other senior managers after work that are the ones that get promoted.* Inspector, J

*As a non-Christian it makes it difficult enough, but actually from my point of view I'm white, I'm male, I'm heterosexual so actually I'm already tipping the scales one way... You think there's somebody in my position who hasn't got my skin colour, who potentially hasn't got my sexual preferences and all the rest of it, they are non-starters straight from the word go.*

*Superintendent, P*

These powerful descriptions of the role of identity and intersectionality in professional experience and perceptions reflect the theory that 'actors who perceive themselves to be in devalued positions can begin building 'trenches of resistance on the basis of difference' (Castells, 2004:8). The connections made between intersectionalities and wider police culture demonstrate the fundamental importance of social identities both within the police service, in terms of police culture, and in the service the police provides. As discussed in Chapter Three, the categorisation of oneself as 'different' and therefore less valued, can lead to the formation and expression of 'resistant identities' (Spalek, 2008:12), which in this context creates an unstable organisational culture and one which is perceived by some as failing to 'do difference'.

Faith was also identified as an important aspect of identity in building legitimacy with members of the same or different faith in the community. Sharing faith in identity was found to play a role in achieving a sense of credibility with community members which contributed to building rapport, trust and more broadly confidence and legitimacy. The alignment of values between faith and professional vocation was found to be important for some participants and facilitated the development of relationships:

*...they tell me about this man that had desecrated the Quran that 'you wouldn't understand that', well yes I do because I'm a person of faith too, I*



*wouldn't like it happening to a Bible let alone a Quran [and] I will take it seriously.*

*Sergeant, Q*

*My values as a Christian parallel very nicely with my values as a police officer I have no issue there whatsoever...My values, my religious values and my professional values are in sync.*

*Sergeant, A*

The perceived dominance of Christianity in the police force has been shown to be a barrier to inclusivity, inviting difference into the police and contributing to a culture which values difference across roles and ranks. The role of identity and the intersectionality of aspects of identity, particularly faith, age and length of service, were found to be significant in the development and maintenance of police insight and understanding of faith both internally and externally in communities. The limited progression in achieving greater representation of diverse faiths in policing perpetuates a *laissez faire* policing culture which does not actively address poor awareness, knowledge or skills in the engagement of diverse communities. The role of police culture in the ability of the police force to 'do difference' in ways which facilitate police-faith relations is highlighted as a significant issue in this study.

### *Police culture*

Recent reflections in academic study recognise the complexity of the phenomena which create cultures in policing (Cockcroft, 2013). However, the similarities between police cultures evidenced across decades of research (based on policing in the UK and US predominantly) arguably allow for discussion of police culture in the singular (Loftus, 2009). In this study, several themes addressing policing culture emerged as impactful on the effectiveness of the police in engaging with faith communities. The description of policing work as 'job to job', 'reactive', 'catching criminals' and 'arresting bad people' was common and community engagement activities were generally viewed as 'soft and fluffy', 'the touchy-feely stuff' and 'slow-time work'. This may be due to the history of the development

of community policing, which became the prevailing approach to managing community unrest in the 1980s and 1990s, as a response to public rioting and the Scarman Report (Reiner, 1991). Support for community policing was not widespread beyond senior leaders, due to operational ranks wanting to 'catch criminals' and undertake 'real policing' (McLaughlin, 2007:96-97, 182-7). The cultural barriers to community policing identified by McLaughlin in 2007 are reflected in this study, demonstrating the strength and longevity of dominant cultures within policing:

*Faith turns a lot of people off...a lot of the work force view is that we are being run by religious hierarchy, and they don't like that. When [name] says things in some seminars, as soon as he mentions religion it turns half of the work force off.*

*Senior Leader, T*

*People think we're just [engaging] to unpick the next terrorist attack as opposed to understanding people's concerns. There's a lack of interest from people around doing it; 'I didn't join the police to engage with nice people I joined to arrest the bad people so why invest time'.*

*Inspector, J*

The speed of policing which drives officers from job to job, alongside an over-reliance on 'standard operating procedures', were apparent factors in the lack of time and interest allocated to the specific issues affecting diverse faith groups. 'Policies', 'processes', 'targets' and 'demand' were very common words used when describing the challenges in engaging with faith communities in relation to the policing culture. The examples below demonstrate officers who present a push-back to the dominant culture:

*There is a culture of going job-to-job, they get to a job, deal with the job and move on...The younger ones worry about complaints and 'oh no, it's become a racist incident or whatever because he thinks I've gone against his*

*religion'...We need to slow down. And they need to know they have the support of their Sergeant and Inspector.*

*Constable, F*

*I've always been an advocate of putting round pegs in the round holes, there are people who wouldn't want to do my job for all the tea in China and be a community officer. [For] the younger generation, there are too many competing targets, too much focus on systems and processes over cultures and values.*

*Sergeant, Q*

Several reasons for the lack of wider challenge to the dominant culture were shared, most commonly referring to the regular movement of officers between posts and responsibilities, generating very few opportunities to develop interpersonal skills and build good relationships with communities. The 'round peg round hole' example provided above was reiterated by several participants, recognising the personal interest and personal responsibility required to render people suitable for community engagement type activities. The concept of personal responsibility was raised a number of times particularly in relation to the training provided around engaging with faith communities; there was a general view which suggested that the most effective way of ensuring knowledge and insight into faith communities was 'to find it yourself'. Participants referenced 'Wikipedia' and 'Google' and shared stories about faith-related festivals, customs and international events that they had researched to better equip themselves when dealing with faith communities and victims of faith-related incidents. Complaints were shared about the level of personal investment in understanding and building strong relationships with faith communities and 'faith leaders', only to be moved to another post or another location with limited or no handover to the next person. There appeared to be little incentive to learn the nuanced details, concerns and customs of specific communities because of the likelihood of movement of role:

*You know what the speed of turnover is like in this organisation; you can train a group of people today and by tomorrow it's a different group of people or they've been moved to a different place.*

*Inspector, J*

The role of personal responsibility and interest in engaging with faith communities was also referenced in relation to the 'mentality' of police officers in the context of the 'hard' policing culture. Issues of faith, equality and diversity in the successful delivery of policing services was described by some interviewees as a 'switch off', 'not interesting', not 'real policing' and a 'tick-box exercise'. Reasons for the development of these attitudes in policing included the prevalence of 'fads' amongst senior leaders both nationally and locally, resulting in little interest in the latest strategy and instead remaining loyal to 'real policing' (McLaughlin, 2007). The following quotations illustrate these views in the context of the policing culture:

*I can just see officers, their reaction when they had to go on the diversity training its 'not that one again' sort of thing, so I don't know how you really get over that, it's a difficult one.*

*Sergeant, Q*

*I think it's probably some barriers within officers themselves that they put up...I don't know whether it's something to do with the mentality of a lot of police officers, I don't think they all take that on board.*

*Constable, O*

As referenced earlier in the chapter, the development and progression of staff who might approach diversity differently and stand out from this mainstream attitude, may be isolated or unable to express their different views or beliefs (Schein, 2004). The creation of associations to support the voices of minority groups in policing has not necessarily been successful in driving unity, as suggested by the participant quoted below. This perspective is supported by Hopkins *et al.* (2004) who suggest that the theory of sub-culture creating solidarity in deviance can be used to help explain the institutional racist police behaviour

identified by the Macpherson Report (Macpherson, 1999). In this sense, minority staff associations create a subculture rather than a counter-culture, which fails to challenge mainstream culture because it only engages minority groups (O'Neill and Holdaway, 2007).

*The Black Police Association right, for me when I joined they were trying to get me to join and I never joined for one reason because I thought having a separate organisation would be very divisive amongst the troops.*

*Sergeant, Z*

Progress in shifting the culture of the force was related to increased diversity more broadly in society and thus in the new recruits into the police. This perspective poses an interesting conflict with the earlier suggestion that young-in-service officers demonstrate lower confidence and experience in engaging with diverse communities. Coupled with issues of the police culture rapidly shaping new recruits to share the attitudes, behaviours, beliefs and norms to create solidarity with existing officers (Miller, 2003), this presents challenges in maximising the impact of new recruits on policing diversity. Despite these issues, younger officers were identified as 'different' and supporting 'difference' in policing:

*The police culture has changed and our attitudes towards people as our knowledge and understanding of different groups increases. We're more approachable, more understanding of different communities, approach them in different ways which then in turn makes them trust us more...The newer generation of younger people that come through see things differently and understand things differently.*

*Constable, L*

Problems relating to the ability of the police to 'do difference' have been shown to be hinged on aspects of policing culture which facilitates dominant identities and roles and values solidarity in policing 'the way it's always been done'. The perceived dominance of Christianity within the police force is indicative of the slow progress made in policing to

increase representation from diverse communities and to challenge the 'old boys network' (Loftus, 2009). These issues have been exacerbated by austerity measures in policing which has had a significant impact on community policing and resources allocated to understanding and engaging with diverse communities (HMIC, 2013). The following section discusses these challenges in detail, exploring the implications of these interwoven issues of culture, structure and strategy in policing faith communities.

### **Valuing Enforcement Over Engagement**

A common framework emerged in discussions about police engagement with faith communities which identified confidence, legitimacy and consent for policing as fundamental to police-faith relations. Whilst this framework was evidently embedded in thinking about the role and purpose of policing, in practice the activities required to develop and maintain relationships with communities were identified as severely limited. The role of austerity in reducing police community engagement and focussing resources towards enforcement was highlighted as a risk to public support for policing. Achieving the balance of effective enforcement whilst maintaining legitimacy and public confidence was considered to be a cyclic problem, often linked to high profile conflict between policing and minority communities and high profile crime problems which demand enforcement. For example, participants continue to reference the riots of the 1980s and 1990s and more recently the riots in 2011 and anti-immigration sentiment linked to the current refugee crisis in Syria. This section presents participants' observations about the impact of enforcement-focussed policing on the relationship between the police and faith communities.

#### *Austerity*

The austerity measures driven by the Coalition Government between 2011 and 2015 and continued by the Conservative Government were consistently raised as a core factor in the

decline of community policing and thus the continued challenge to build confidence amongst faith communities. Austerity, budget cuts and reduced resources were mentioned in every interview and most commonly cited as a reason why 'things aren't as good as they used to be' for police-community relations more broadly. This seemed to relate specifically to community policing during the 1990s and early 2000s, when investment in engagement activities and PCSOs was at its highest. The role of social and economic change on strategies and approaches to community policing have been evidenced, particularly in relation to levels of immigration and community cohesion (Brogden and Nijhar, 2005; Savage, 2007). The political drive behind agendas which supported community policing was focussed on community cohesion, reducing the likelihood of riots and improving perceptions of legitimacy in policing (Reiner, 2000). Arguably, these political drivers are ever-present, but perhaps even more so in the post-Brexit context in which anti-immigration and anti-diversity are evident in public discourse (Bauböck and Scholten, 2016). However, the political focus for policing continues to be reduction in 'volume' crime (for example burglary, robbery and theft), which results in restricted resources for community policing:

*We're getting absolutely hammered for burglaries, we're trying to reduce violence and there aren't enough staff so how do you do that, how do you meet those competing demands?*

*Chief Inspector, N*

*It feels to me from a government perspective on community policing, partly because of austerity and that it is on the fringes of the policing, that it's nice to do but perhaps not essential.*

*Inspector, C*

Concerns about access to 'seldom-heard' or 'diverse communities' were raised, particularly in relation to maintaining effective communication with communities to support investigations and to provide reassurance following incidents which stimulate public interest. Austerity measures appear to be driving a changing policing model, from one where networks and engagement with communities were valued, to one where resources

focus on enforcement activities. The impact of this shift in policing approach also creates constraints in opportunities to build perceptions of procedural justice and legitimacy across faith communities, where interactions are most likely to be under negative circumstances (Jackson *et al.*, 2012).

### *Militaristic 'storm trooper' policing*

There was consensus amongst participants that the police service has a focus on 'volume crime', described as 'serious acquisitive crime' including burglary, vehicle crime, violence and robbery in particular. The role of targets in policing were perceived to be a main driver for the focus on these crime types and for drawing resource away from community policing. Participants felt this was leading to a 'storm trooper' style of policing, where officers 'swoop in', deal with incidents swiftly and leave. The key risks identified with this approach were loss of community information and relationships, leading to a reduction in prevention work and limited ability to stop escalation of incidents and damage to public confidence.

The 'broken windows' thesis (Wilson and Kelling, 1982) was referenced by a few participants making the point that low level antisocial behaviour, street drinking and people 'hanging around' are precursors to the decline of social communities and the movement of law-abiding citizens away from such areas. More recent academic work supports these observations, whilst recognising that antisocial behaviour and other low level problems tend to be identified in the same locations as more serious crime (Lea, 2010; Harcourt and Ludwig, 2006; Harcourt, 2001). This theory is considered important in the development of community policing approaches in the UK (Squires and Stephen, 2005) which is arguably supported by the references made to it by participants over three decades on. However, Hopkins Burke (2002) argues that this theory has not maintained impact in policing due to the difficulties in creating sustainable strategies longer term. This view is perhaps supported by the findings in this study, which suggest that in a time of austerity policing approaches cannot find ways to deliver community policing and maintain community



relations. Participants recognised the impact of this shift away from community policing on the overall culture of the police, generating police officers who may not recognise the value of engaging with communities:

*Psychologically in policing we have to be careful that we don't end up with a generation of police officers that think they're the storm troopers, they only do the tough stuff, they only do the doors bashing in, the arrests all that kind of stuff.*

*Superintendent, P*

*We'll just be like the military won't we, we'll just go in and we'll deal with carnage when it erupts and then we'll clear off again.*

*Inspector, J*

*I think that we're being pushed down the route of going to a much more American model of policing which is we don't do pink and fluffy community stuff we are law enforcement agents and that's all we are.*

*Inspector, C*

A number of concerns emerged about a militaristic approach to policing, in particular the risks associated with limited knowledge of incivilities, crime and victimisation that is not reported. Without community policing, participants anticipated severe limitations in accessing intelligence from communities about movement of people and issues, encouraging witness participation in justice processes and engaging 'community leaders and messengers' to share information across communities. These concerns were considered particularly pertinent for faith communities, who may already hold positions that are on the periphery of police engagement. The role of the PCSO across these activities was referenced in every interview, largely framed by the reduction in resources and the potential to lose the PCSO role from policing entirely:

*The whole community thing's getting stripped out. [Community policing teams] are getting reduced which is amazing to me because I think once you've lost that, you've lost it, you'll never get it back. PCSOs are going by the lorry load [and] officers are getting pulled from [community policing] to the front line so we're going backwards instead of going forwards.*

*Sergeant, Z*

This perception of militaristic storm trooper style policing creates further complexity to the issues explored in previous chapters regarding increasing reporting of faith hate crime and improving perceptions of procedural justice and legitimacy amongst faith communities. Opportunities for positive interactions with the police are reduced in this model of policing, which minimises the potential to build trust, to demonstrate equality across groups and to undertake problem-solving or crime prevention together, all of which are key activities in community policing and building legitimacy (Roberts and Herrington, 2013; Jackson *et al.*, 2012; Baker and Hyde, 2011).

### *Going backwards*

The phrase 'going backwards' and similar terms were used by several interviewees, in the context of the ramifications of austerity, the significant reductions in community engagement, the lack of a long term strategy to maintain relationships with communities and the poor 'corporate memory' to prevent the same mistakes being made again and again. Participants raised concerns at the speed of new and emerging communities, increasingly diverse communities, 'immigrants and refugees arriving' and 'growing Eastern European communities'. The impact of national and international events on those individuals and communities and the potential for unrest was also recognised and supported by studies demonstrating the rapid connection between global events to local acts and sites of hostility and violence (Anthias, 2006). Their concerns centred on the lack of information collected about communities and the poor use of systems to collate

information and keep up-to-date records of key individuals and communities to engage with. Many suggested that the gains achieved in the 1990s were beginning to be lost and that neighbourhood policing teams were relying on infrastructure and contacts from several years ago.

Beyond austerity, a lack of interest from senior leaders was recognised to be a core factor in the changing priorities of the force and the decline of the PCSO in both numbers and amount of time and focus paid to community policing. For those with longer length of service, the connections between the development of the PCSO role and the challenges to the relationship between the police and communities, in particular diverse communities, was very clear and remained significant. The potential removal of the PCSO role was seen as a 'backward move' and presents real risks in recreating the problems of the 1980s and 1990s and more recently the problems caused by counter-terrorism policies. These identified risks are echoed in academic thinking, where the relationship between policing and communities, in particular young people and minority ethnic communities, are important to understanding public riots and conflict (Dunleavy *et al.* 2012).

*We'll realise that we've got it wrong...because we are supposed to be policing that community, we're not supposed to be policing numbers.*

*Superintendent, P*

*I think we have a one size fits all type approach which doesn't work. We used to have a [system] where it had your key community contacts and when there was a murder in [sector] within forty minutes I had all the known people round the table. We continue to think it's about Prevent and nothing else in reality... we pick and choose which faith groups we engage with to suit our own purposes.*

*Inspector, J*

A key risk in 'going backwards' and reducing police engagement with faith communities was identified by several participants as relating to community cohesion; examples were provided about prevailing prejudiced attitudes amongst some communities which could be identified and managed by the police in the very early stages where those relationships were strong. The impact of good policing relationships on the prevention and management of low-level antisocial behaviour and religiously-aggravated incidents or faith hate crime was referenced several times, particularly in relation to issues involving infrastructures such as schools and places of worship. Recognising that many incidents of this nature go unreported, it was suggested that the PCSOs and the community engagement officers were able to encourage conversations about these types of issues and manage local mediation to prevent escalation of issues. This also meant that the intelligence on unreported incidents was collected and that local neighbourhood policing teams were able to identify and manage local issues of potential hostility and negative relationships between communities. As suggested in the following comments, levels of tension between communities can fluctuate and can be stimulated by external factors, which requires policing to be informed about local level issues:

*[Community members] tried to turn an old pub into a Mosque and it was like all the demons of the moment came out because of what all that might bring.*

*Sergeant, Q*

*It bubbles a little bit... like getting pigs heads put on temple walls and things like that, when the Prevent side of things were going on.*

*Chief Inspector, N*

This need to remain informed about local level issues supports the concepts underlying community policing and reiterates the need for police-community relationships (Glaser, 2010). A number of participants expressed frustration at the degradation of their relationships with communities and recognised the inequity that may be experienced by

faith groups where some remain a focus due to policy agendas or specific local need, for example the policing of very busy prayer days and religious festivals. These types of policing requirements were more likely to be implemented for specific faith groups, such as Muslims, Sikhs and Hindus, where large congregations in small public spaces was anticipated. Interviewees recognised that such policing activities were minimal across other faith groups, which reduced the likelihood of engagement. It was recognised by some that inequitable policing associated with faith in identity could create unrest or divides between communities:

*'Oh well you do it, you do it for the bloody Sikhs but you wouldn't do it for us' and I think that's probably because they've never had that contact with their local officer.*

*PCSO, B*

*It's borne out by what's happening with radical Islam and so forth I think once you start to give specific policing focus to any specific community you do get kick back from others, you know it is divisive isn't it? ...I'm really worried about it genuinely and I think that there is potential for us to be slipping down the route of community cohesion issues, increased hate crime and I think that's a genuine threat.*

*Chief Inspector, X*

Reflecting discussion in the previous chapter about the role of institutions in creating an 'enabling environment' for the 'construction of difference' (Perry, 2001:179), several participants recognised their role in creating or exacerbating divides between faith communities. This 'cultural work of the police' (Fraser, 2000:114) can serve to legitimise or validate some groups over others, contributing to the marginalisation of specific identities in experiences of policing. These findings suggest a link between austerity and inequality in policing, which risks recreating some of the factors which led to public unrest in the 1980s and 1990s. Specifically, it suggests that 'militaristic' policing approaches can cause policing to lose touch with communities and to depict specific identities or groups as 'deserving' or

‘undeserving’ of police engagement and protection. This disproportionality in policing is discussed in the following section, exploring participants’ perceptions and experiences of policing approaches directed towards specific faith groups.

### **Disproportionate Policing of Faith Communities**

The stark difference between awareness of policies and common practice in dealing with counter-terrorism in relation to Muslim communities compared to engagement with faith communities more broadly was evident. As discussed earlier, this was perceived to be due to a lack of interest from senior leaders, a lack of resources and an overall sense that this was the role of the community engagement officers. This inequity in relationships between Muslim communities and the police compared to faith communities more broadly is documented widely in academic literature which shows that distrust on both sides developed rapidly due to counter-terrorism policy, rendering Muslims a ‘suspect community’ (Millings, 2013; McGhee, 2010; Poynting and Perry, 2007). The indirect impact of this policing approach on police-faith relations more broadly has not been explored in academic research, but participants in this study reflected on the likely impact on perceptions of fairness and legitimacy in policing approaches. Participants described a need for expertise in managing these issues, acknowledging the roles of the community engagement officers and Special Branch in understanding diverse communities, risks to community cohesion, targeted hostility and experiences of hate crime. This section brings together the challenges described by participants in meeting the needs of diverse faith communities, tackling terrorism and responding to specific issues including faith hate crime.

#### *‘Crack down’ on radicalisation and terrorism*

Descriptions of the culture of policing repeatedly presented the view that ‘what gets measured gets done’ and when ‘something comes direct from government...it’s happening’. These perceptions were reiterated in discussions about strategies or plans for

the engagement of faith communities. Whilst engagement with faith communities was identified as the 'bread and butter' of neighbourhood policing teams, the connection between limited interest from senior leaders in this agenda and the lack of strategy, planning or accountability was clear. In contrast, participants were very aware of the national 'Contest' strategy and the Prevent agenda programme of work underneath it. The clarity provided around this programme, the national focus and the impact of the influx of resources and funding when it was first implemented, consolidated police commitment to this agenda. For most participants this was the only strategy or direction they were aware of in relation to engaging with faith communities and the majority recognised that this was flawed against the principles of policing:

*The only obvious time that I've ever been aware of faith being strategically engaged or talked about is through Prevent, in reality. That's the only time that people have really taken any real notice and said 'how do we engage, how do we do what we need to do'. But fundamentally that was driven by an intelligence gathering issue.*

*Superintendent, P*

*You know the only faith community we went into initially was the Muslim community and that wasn't because we wanted to build contacts in the Muslim community it was because we thought they were all terrorists.*

*Inspector, J*

The inevitable focus on Muslim communities that resulted from the Prevent strategy was widely recognised and described in ways which suggested it was broadly accepted as a policing priority. The examples provided suggested increased supervision and management of incidents and issues raised by members of Muslim communities, leading to an improved level of service and responsiveness above and beyond other faith groups:

*Very rarely do we go into Churches and no one expects us to go into Churches. However, we are expected to go into Mosques and engage with Muslims after Friday prayers.*

*Sergeant, A*

*We always focus on the Muslim community and the perception of the Muslim community is that 'you're doing that because you think we are terrorists', but actually they're probably the biggest, most visible group and people will know where the Mosques are, how many people know where the Gurdwaras are, or the Hindu temples?*

*Senior Leader, T*

It is evident that Muslim communities receive a different type of policing to wider communities, both in terms of support and surveillance (Husband and Alam, 2011; Chakraborti, 2010) and research participants shared varied observations about the results of this increased focus. Some talked about potential benefits to the Muslim community, in terms of additional visits and police visibility in and around their places of worship, faster responses to issues or problems raised and the additional funding and resources provided to communities, which have been used to run community events and activities. Furthermore, a few participants discussed perceived benefits to the police service more broadly, suggesting increased knowledge and insight into Muslim communities previously unknown to them. These perceived benefits strictly contrast the widely held perspective in academia that the increased focus in policing has effectively labelled the Muslim community a 'suspect community' and damaged relationships with policing (Millings, 2013; Ashan, 2011; McGhee, 2010; Poynting and Perry, 2007). Whilst not the views held by the majority of participants in this study, the below quotations demonstrate the perspectives of three participants who identified this sense of 'benefit':

*I think actually we sometimes go the other way and ensure that they get an even better quality of service. You know everybody deserves a great quality of*



*service but it's seen as more of a risk for us than had been Joe Bloggs that had had some damage caused.*

*Sergeant, H*

*Prevent is very well received you know, 'cause they're getting all that advice and all that extra awareness and training and it all came for free. It probably did us good in terms of policing, because we're probably getting into industries and speaking to various levels of business people around the place that, without Prevent, we'd probably never bother speaking to.*

*Chief Inspector, I*

This perspective identifies benefits to engagement with faith communities, recognising that without Prevent, the instigation to generate dialogue and relationships with Muslim communities would not have been present. This supports the view that counter-terrorism strategies have served as a reminder that police-faith relations are important to crime prevention, through supporting community policing and 'co-production' (Dunn *et al.*, 2016). The unintended benefits of the over-policing of Muslim communities could therefore provide a rationale for engagement with wider faith communities. Nevertheless, this retrospective view of the benefits of police engagement with Muslim communities has not yet progressed into active development or resourcing to improve wider police-faith relations. Learning from the disproportionate policing of Muslim communities, particularly in relation to the role of neighbourhood and community engagement officers, was a key issue raised by participants. More could be done to demarcate between community engagement activities and intelligence-gathering tasks to enable officers to prioritise the maintenance of trust, confidence and legitimacy where appropriate:

*A local officer took the list [of questions] with them to the Mosque (laughs)...is that the right way to go about it? To send a local officer into the Mosque to try and elicit information? Surely there are more elegant ways in which we can elicit the information.*

*Sergeant, A*

*Most of the time we knew that we were looking in the wrong place anyway, if we were looking for people that had extreme views, we weren't really going to encounter them every day by just chatting to somebody at the Mosque.*

*Constable, O*

These observations reflect both the practical and the morally problematic issues of gathering intelligence and information whilst seeking to build relationships and trust. Whilst these issues are most closely linked to the policing of Muslim communities, it became apparent that the policing of domestic violence, child sexual exploitation, honour-based violence and other hidden types of crime required engagement across faith groups. Participants reflected on the role of 'specialists' in these situations, describing a three-tiered approach across neighbourhood policing teams, community engagement officers and Special Branch. In practice, the roles and responsibilities of these three tiers overlap and create further complexities, as discussed in the next section. More broadly, 'specialists' were relied upon for contextual and cultural information about diverse communities.

### *The Specialists*

Cultural awareness, hate crime and gathering intelligence were three areas of knowledge which emerged as important in the development and maintenance of police-faith relations. 'Specialists' in these areas were identified, namely two 'community engagement officers' referred to several times so far in this chapter. These officers were described as providing 'distinct', specialist knowledge in timely and helpful ways, in particular making connections to specific communities and individuals to provide reassurance, information and advice. The role was considered fundamental to several core policing principles and activities, including development and maintenance of community relationships, identification of issues and concerns, presentation of policing as sensitive to issues related to diverse communities and proactive in supporting vulnerable communities. The quotations below

reflect participants' thinking about the need for knowledge and insight for the purposes of both reassurance and protection of communities, serving as a reminder that in policing 'you never know what might happen':

*When there is a problem; when we've got the events going on in France<sup>1</sup> just recently, the biggest effect is probably in the Muslim community and the Jewish community you know who to talk to, whether it's just for reassurance or sometimes they want to come to us to say 'we have got some concerns', but if we haven't built up that relationship, they don't know who to go to.*

*Constable, O*

*Not only are they Muslim but they are Shia Muslim at the moment which is even more of a particular issue because of what's going on in the Middle East now so you just never know what quite might happen.*

*Constable, O*

The impact and resonance of international events for faith communities in the UK has been shown through connections between global events and local acts of violence and hostility (Anthias, 2006) and with the rapid spread of information and stories online the speed of police awareness and response is important. In the context of the wider policing culture which renders this type of activity 'soft and fluffy' or a low priority, the two dedicated community engagement officer roles take responsibility for liaising with communities across the entire county area. Whilst there are neighbourhood police officers or 'beat officers' who take a keen personal interest in these issues and seek to support diverse communities, the pace at which these officers are moved around the force breaks down relationships and limits learning. This raises the dichotomy between investing in 'specialist'

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<sup>1</sup> During 2015 six events in France were considered to be related to Islamist militants and 'Islamic State', most notably the 7-9th January attacks on the magazine 'Charlie Hebdo' offices killing 12 people including the editor and celebrated cartoonists, a policewoman was murdered and a Jewish supermarket was attacked, killing four people. Also on 13-14<sup>th</sup> November gunmen and suicide bombers attacked a concert hall, a major stadium, restaurants and bars in Paris, leaving 130 people dead and hundreds more wounded.

or 'generalist' skills for the policing of diverse communities. There appeared to be little incentive for those with limited knowledge of diverse faiths and cultures to develop their own insights, instead referring to the 'specialists', who in turn seemed to be struggling to meet the demands of the communities across the county.

This challenge is also reflected in the policing approach to hate crime. The 'Hate Crime Unit' had been disbanded only a few months prior to this research and the impact of this decision was felt to be significant. Moving officers from dedicated roles to neighbourhood and response policing teams was delivered at the same time as training<sup>2</sup> was provided across all officers and staff to provide a more 'resilient and sustainable' approach to dealing with hate crime. This 'omni-competent' approach to hate crime responsibilities was also designed to reduce the 'not my job' mentality that specialist policing teams can engender in the wider organisation, as reflected in research (Hall, 2013). One participant stated 'when you have a squad for anything it becomes the squad's responsibility and not the collective responsibility.' The opposing view, provided by more participants in this sample, suggested that the disbandment of the Hate Crime Unit represented a 'disinvestment in hate crime' and devalues the plight of diverse communities struggling to come forward:

*We spent years telling people that we take it seriously and then get rid of it...training people to know it, understand it, know how hate crime affects people and then [we] just chuck 'em out.*

*Inspector, J*

*For an issue such as hate crime where a lot of it is about relationships, understanding faith and different beliefs, you know understanding where to get people help and support from, understanding the impact on them. I think it's a foolish thing to do, it looks like we're not taking it seriously and are not bothered.*

*Constable, L*

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<sup>2</sup> This training was called 'Protecting Vulnerable People' and provided a session regarding the identification of hate crime and the impact on victims, including input from local community support groups

A demarcation became apparent between policing of 'day-to-day' hate crime and those experiencing 'serious attacks', for example the difference between verbal abuse and physically violent attacks. The impact of victimisation can be overlooked due to this limited framework of understanding the impact of hate crime on victims (Chakraborti, 2010). One of the challenges in building knowledge and reliable data around faith hate crime, as explored in the previous chapter, is to embed more sophisticated understandings of the nature, extent, scope and impact of all hate crime. Perceptions of different 'levels' of faith hate crime identified during interviews suggests simple and binary understandings of hate crime, largely defined by the experience of physical violence or verbal abuse. Overly simplified descriptions of faith hate crime reflect biases in thinking and understanding of this type of victimisation and present risk to the legitimacy of policing, particularly where such biases are evident across institutional discourses and practices (Millings, 2013; Mirza *et al.*, 2007). The quotation below suggests these biases are linked to the distribution of resources against a framework of 'severity':

*I'm sorry, but there's hate crime and there's hate crime. There's elements of appalling but low level language, inappropriate language through to some quite atrocious attacks. Do you want to put your dedicated skilled officer around a bit of...verbal bullying?*

*Superintendent, M*

This example presents the officer prefacing this opinion with an apology, which demonstrates an understanding that this opinion might not be favourable or publicly acceptable. Indeed, the majority of participants expressed a counter-view, articulating the importance of the in-depth knowledge, insight and empathy held by specialists in the Hate Crime Unit and the positive impact this can have for encouraging victim reporting:

*A woman who wore a niqab had some quite nasty abuse, she really didn't want to report it...and I don't think there was any way she was going to report it if*

*a uniform officer was going to knock at her door and probably not give her the right response.*

*Constable, O*

The third area of 'specialist' skills considered to be important in police-faith relations was the gathering of intelligence. Special Branch is the force resource for investigating and preventing 'matters of national security', which are predominantly terrorism and extremist activity. The community engagement officer roles were originally funded by Prevent and their history is interlocked with Special Branch. The community engagement officers 'took the baton of Prevent and matured it', looking beyond Islamist extremism and focussing on increasing reporting of issues, concerns and victimisation across diverse communities. This positioned these roles between Special Branch, retaining a commitment to Prevent and counter-terrorism, and neighbourhood policing teams and PCSOs undertaking localised community engagement.

Whilst the core function of Special Branch was perceived to be clear, participants suggested that the neighbourhood policing teams and PCSOs were tasked by Special Branch on occasion for specific information. This created conflict for several participants who felt a duty to prioritise the development and maintenance of trust with community members, particularly where there was no evidence of risk or criminal behaviour. The extracts below present the thinking of a few participants and demonstrate the complexity of the factors at play in the demarcation between the three policing roles:

*There was a real directive that you've got to make in-roads and you've got to get to know the Muslim community, and almost they wanted me to map out what our Muslim community was. Along with that came specific questions [that] needed to be asked. That's where the problem came for me because I was happy to build up those relationships [but] the community became very suspicious.*

*Constable, O*

*[I] raised the concern that we've got two different aspects, where we've got the [Special Branch] element of engaging with communities, and the local policing element, and I'm not sure I see a convincing join up; to the extent that I'm convinced that local policing teams know more about local policing dynamics than Special Branch.*

*Superintendent, M*

The specialist roles in policing discussed in this section impact significantly on police-faith relations and are found to be both positive and problematic in the proportionality of policing faith communities. The skills and experience associated with those dedicated to community engagement reflect the ideal model of community policing and yet are not resourced to impact broadly across diverse faith communities. The move away from specialists in dealing with hate crime and the blurred boundaries of those gathering intelligence specifically related to religious extremism presents challenges to 'generic' police officers across neighbourhood and response policing teams. The development of perceptions of legitimacy requires consistency across interactions with police officers and the positive impact made by community engagement officers can often be undone by others (Roberts and Herrington, 2013). The development and maintenance of legitimacy across communities was collectively important across participants and linked to opportunities to improve the effectiveness of policing. These opportunities could arguably be capitalised on in relation to faith communities through improved engagement, as discussed in the following section.

### **Legitimacy and Policing by Consent**

'Securing consent for policing', building confidence, trust, perceptions of legitimacy and delivering a satisfactory service to the public have been key themes in policing since its inception (Walklate, 2000:235). The interviews in this study reflect these themes, repeatedly referring to the 'Peelian principles' as the foundation for policing in the UK and using the phrase 'the public are the police and the police are the public' to underline issues

of trust, confidence and legitimacy in their concerns about their engagement with faith communities in recent years. The need for a 'mandate' to police appeared to be felt deeply and concerns about increasing enforcement-focussed policing and reducing community engagement were shared across participants. The role of the PCSO symbolised this; reducing in numbers, shifting in focus to reactive policing duties and minimising community engagement activities, which are relied upon to build legitimacy across communities. On top of these resourcing issues, engagement activities were perceived by some to be outdated, based on historical community infrastructure and only reaching the 'loudest voices'. Missing the views, experiences and concerns of community members beyond the 'leaders' and the 'elders', was described as a blocker to tackling challenging crime issues and ensuring 'sub-groups' are listened to.

#### *Policing by consent*

'Consent' for policing was considered 'fundamental to keep the peace' and was referenced by almost all participants when asked 'how important?' engagement with faith communities is. Being able to 'identify' with the police and understand decisions and actions taken by policing were described as important considerations in public consent, reflecting the concept that 'procedural justice' reinforces a sense of social identification and solidarity with the police (Bradford *et al.*, 2015). Procedural justice, as described in Chapter Two, is 'about the fairness of the processes through which the police make decisions and exercise authority' (Sunshine and Taylor, 2003:514). The prevailing actions through which participants suggested they built or maintained consent and perceptions of legitimacy with faith communities were building relationships, reaching out to those 'most disengaged', providing reassurance during 'culturally-sensitive' incidents and showing people respect for their beliefs. Some participants challenged the connection between these approaches and 'what happens in practice'; visiting places of worship and attempting to be 'visible', which largely meant 'visible to community leaders'. The quotation below demonstrates some of this thinking, reiterating issues discussed so far, for example representativeness of faith



communities, sensitivity to faith-related incidents and the need for police officers to provide support:

*Part of the role of a constable is to be equally accountable and answerable, and of service to whoever... We can't do our job properly without doing that and we have learnt some lessons I think, some harsh lessons about what happens when we let things go or become complacent, because of issues; whether its Rotherham<sup>3</sup>, whether it's the Prevent agenda, whether it's radicalisation or whether it's a deep mistrust of people who wear silly uniform.*

*Sergeant, Q*

Policing by consent was established as fundamental to equality in policing and to achieving legitimacy across groups. However, as referenced by the participant above, specific issues and policy agendas create challenges in the categorisation and labelling of identities or groups as perpetrator communities. Increasing engagement with community leaders in those targeted groups was identified by participants as a common response to maintaining communication and relationships, although it was recognised that engagement with the most visible community leaders was unlikely to be effective.

### *The usual suspects*

The challenges of building trust, confidence and perceptions of legitimacy in policing amongst faith communities are deepened by weaknesses in communication and engagement activities. The differing roles undertaken by the community engagement officers and PCSOs described above demonstrate the complexity in achieving expertise in faith and relationships in a context of stretched resources and increasingly diverse communities. A reliance on existing infrastructure as opposed to continuous development

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<sup>3</sup> 'Rotherham' relates to an independent inquiry into child sexual abuse in the town, published in 2014. The report estimated that 1,400 children had been sexually abused in the town between 1997 and 2013, predominantly by gangs of British-Pakistani Muslim men.

became apparent. For example, engagement activities focussed on visiting known places of worship, communicating predominantly with 'community leaders' and using structured mechanisms such as 'Independent Advisory Groups' (IAG) as core avenues through which to build relationships.

Independent Advisory Groups have been in existence in policing in England and Wales since 1999, as an initiative following the Macpherson Report into the Steven Lawrence murder, designed to 'start a process that created a genuine partnership with all sections of the community, encouraging the active involvement of people from diverse groups...to engender trust and confidence in such groups' (ACPO, 2011:5-6). In most areas IAGs are in place for towns, boroughs or districts and invite volunteers from all communities to provide critical challenge, advice and views on policies and practice, to safeguard against disadvantage of sections of communities (ACPO, 2011). The value of IAGs to policing was emphasised by a number of participants, in particular due to the opportunities afforded to diverse communities to develop relationships with policing, to hear their views and concerns and to gain 'advocates' and 'links' into communities to help build trust and confidence. The extract below reflects challenges raised about the reach of the IAG and other engagement structures into communities beyond those typically willing and able to be engaged:

*I think the term sort of 'critical friend' has been used and I think it's quite a good way of explaining it [but] I think the problem is that there is a lot here in the council, they've got six forums running and then you've got the IAG and you've got the inter-faith group and you've got this and you've got that and key individuals from certain faiths and communities are constantly asked.*

*Constable, G*

The sense that IAGs are, or have become, institutionalised, unrepresentative, 'out of touch' and essentially outdated was evident, largely due to the perception that 'the usual suspects'

are often found in these groups, for example the community ‘leaders’ or individuals in communities with the ‘loudest voices’. Challenges were also raised due to the style of the IAGs, which remains a traditional physical meeting arrangement with long-standing members, agenda items and discussions. The ability for the police to engage beyond those most visible and available to them appears to require a shift into new, dynamic ways of communicating with diverse groups. For example, breaking physical and language barriers and moving beyond a ‘committee’ structure which is more accessible for some than others:

*The [IAG] needs to be something that is more responsive, dynamic and which uses modern, probably social media to facilitate that.*

*Chief Inspector, I*

*I guarantee that if I look at the [IAGs] I will see some of the familiar faces that have been around for years. Also for me personally the Independent Advisory Group has got a life span of twelve months before it's then institutionalised.*

*Superintendent, P*

Research addressing the policing of conflict between Catholic and Protestant communities in Northern Ireland also found a ‘tenuous relationship between public involvement and police accountability’ due to the challenges of involvement of all communities, recognising that progress was ‘compounded by the fact that it is the Protestant majority who actually participate’ (Topping, 2008:6). Whilst participants recognised the need to engage with more diverse communities beyond the ‘loudest voices’ to achieve their objectives around building perceptions of legitimacy across communities, they acknowledged difficulty in achieving this in practice. Perceived bias in police engagement with some identities or groups over others presents significant risk to police legitimacy. This ‘cultural work’ of the police reflects interaction that ‘is regulated by an institutionalised pattern of cultural value that constitutes some categories of social actors as valid and legitimate and others as deficient or inferior’ (Fraser, 2000:114). This empowerment and disempowerment of social

identities demonstrates the significance of police community engagement structures in defining their legitimacy amongst those social groups (Loader and Mulcahy, 2003:39). Participants shared comments which demonstrate their frustration with current arrangements:

*Those that shout loudest get our attention, that's the way that it is.*

*Constable, G*

*I often wonder how representative [community leaders] are of their communities because we don't tend to get an awful lot of problems with forty-plus men living in communities.*

*Sergeant, A*

The need to 'get beyond' the community leaders was not described in ways which presented negative perceptions of the identity as a 'leader' or as individuals, but instead in recognition of the challenging issues which occur within communities that community leaders may often be unaware of:

*You look at things like the Asian communities' domestic violence, they don't want to admit to their domestic violence because it's almost a slur on their culture. Females having extra-marital affairs - they wouldn't do that, how do you deal with that because if you raise an issue about that, there is chance of honour-based violence...I hate using the term, but when you speak to more Westernised, younger people that would turn round and go 'yeah actually, this is happening'.*

*Chief Inspector, N*

The need to develop police-faith relations beyond community leaders and the most visible identities in communities was emphasised, recognising the specificity of experiences across identities and the less visible issues policing addresses. In particular, concerns regarding victimisation associated with different faith and cultural backgrounds was raised as a

significant issue requiring continuous development of relationships. Participants gave examples of these issues, including female genital mutilation, forced marriage, honour-based violence and modern slavery. Building trust across communities was associated with developing relationships beyond community leaders, particularly where community leaders tended to be middle-aged men. Whilst recognition of this issue was evident, policy or practice development to tackle this issue was not clear. However, the need for communities to identify and engage with these hidden types of victimisation was highlighted and the role of policing in enabling faith communities to tackle issues in their own communities was identified as an opportunity not yet taken advantage of. As Strang (1995:20) points out; 'strong communities can speak to us in a moral voice' and they allow 'the policing by the communities rather than the policing of communities', contributing to the legitimacy of policing activities.

#### *Faith community action*

In the UK faith-based organisations have visibly contributed to crime prevention and community safety agendas (Birdwell, 2013) and there is research evidence to suggest that informal social control activities undertaken by communities can significantly impact upon the level of crime in a given neighbourhood (Sargeant *et al.*, 2013). Tyler (2006) suggests that community residents' willingness to engage with the police to solve local problems is one of the key factors in building police legitimacy. Participants in this study appeared to agree with this, suggesting that schemes such as 'Street Pastors'<sup>4</sup> have been important activities through which relationships with Christian communities in particular have developed, leading to greater engagement with, and advocacy for, their local policing teams. The scheme was described as a demonstration of the 'good will of people with faith', 'support for the police' and 'volunteering which practically helps us to police the night-time economy'. The Jewish 'Community Security Trust' (CST) was another example provided by

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<sup>4</sup> 'Street Pastors' was pioneered in London in 2003 and now operates in nearly three hundred towns and cities across the UK, involving volunteers of Christian faith patrolling busy streets late at night and helping the people they come across.

participants when describing the active involvement and participation of faith communities in preventing crime. As a national registered charity with a long history in protecting British Jews, this organisation of Jewish volunteers provides security services for all Jewish communities and is seen at most Jewish events. Due to the organised infrastructure of the CST and the perception that Jewish communities have 'suffered for decades' having been 'persecuted in every country they live in', the CST was viewed slightly differently by participants compared to Street Pastors. The rationale for the CST was considered to be valid and the design of it being delivered by Jewish people for Jewish people appeared to legitimise its purpose in the views of policing. However, Street Pastors and faith community action more broadly seemed to raise concerns about the provision of safety or support services for individuals and groups of different faiths. The need for secularity in policing appeared to generate conflict with the concept of faith as a driver for service delivery:

*Faith-based communities tend to have a little bit more social responsibility...It just is always a little bit of a niggle there for me because [Street Pastors] are exclusive to Christianity and it's not wider and that was a bit of a surprise for me.*

*Inspector, Y*

The potentially divisive nature of schemes which only invite volunteers from one faith was perceived by only a few participants to be an issue, but reflected the academic debate about the role of the police and the state in recycling 'in-group' and 'out-group' identities and legitimising community leaders in ways which may prevent the voices from less visible or engaged communities being heard (Clarke *et al.*, 2007). The difference in the perceptions of the Jewish CST scheme were evident in the types of descriptions used compared to those referencing Street Pastors and watch schemes, using explanations for the need for additional protection 'following years of persecution', 'continued targeting' and 'almost being taught to fear attack from history'. The quotations below reflect the majority of comments made with regards to the Jewish CST:

*I know from the persecution the Jewish community feel that is a huge issue for them throughout the world. We're not going to change that, you can see sometimes the football chanting and you know for me I'm thinking it's alien but it still happens and it's still a major issue for that community.*

*Sergeant, D*

*I think the Jewish community are slightly different, I think they are a community that are continually concerned about their safety and that goes back, hundreds of years of history has dealt them that card and I don't think anyone could blame them for being concerned to the point of paranoia really about their safety.*

*Constable, G*

However, a few participants suggested that the existence of the Jewish CST potentially signalled a failing of policing to meet the specific needs of Jewish communities and to ensure the protection of all communities from harm. Whilst some participants thought that the CST was able to provide a level of security resourcing that the police would not be able to meet, others thought that the creation and maintenance of specific voluntary groups to deal with targeted hostility within communities was a reflection on their perceptions of police prioritisation and effectiveness:

*I think it clearly sends us a message that the Jewish community don't think we are good enough to protect them.*

*Superintendent, P*

The value of policing by consent and community policing which engages faith communities came through clearly in the findings of this study. Concerns about the role of faith in community action reflects the risk-based approach to policing diverse communities which focusses on avoiding discrimination (McFayden and Prideaux, 2014). This approach presents limitations to the progression of police-faith relations and creating dynamic communication and engagement practices which maximise opportunities for community

participation in policing. The enduring commitment to policing by consent and striving for perceptions of legitimacy in policing across diverse communities was manifest in narratives surrounding all aspects of police-faith relations. However, this commitment to values of participation and legitimacy seems to be at odds with policing approaches and decisions which under-resource and devalue community engagement and the skills and activities associated with it.

## **Conclusion**

This exploration of police perspectives of relationships between policing and faith communities has brought attention to several issues in policing, which collectively reflect cultural barriers in the effective policing of faith communities. The role of identity and the intersectionality of identity and experience in policing plays a significant role in enabling policing to 'do difference', which has significant ramifications for police-faith relations. The dominance of Christianity and the in-group of the 'old boys network' is reflected in the under-representation of diverse faith and cultural backgrounds in policing. This issue of 'in-groups' in policing is important due to their impact on defining 'real' police work and the level of value placed on understanding difference in communities and valuing community engagement.

The decline of community policing and the growth of militaristic enforcement-focussed policing approaches is related to austerity in police budgets, although it could be argued that the direction of resources away from community policing is also fuelled by a culture which devalues community relationships. This move away from community policing raises concerns about going backwards and replicating the police-community relationship failures of the 1980s and 1990s. Effective policing of diverse faith groups is recognised as a key challenge to policing going forward, following nearly two decades of the disproportionate policing of Muslim communities and the new context of anti-immigration discourse and rising hate crime (Bauböck and Scholten, 2016). The structural design of policing to tackle



crime and build community relationships in parallel continues to generate questions about 'specialist' and 'generalist' roles in policing. The skills and understanding of diverse communities, cultures and the impact of faith hate crime, for example, are not currently exhibited by the majority of generalist neighbourhood or response police officers. Whilst a generalist approach might be favourable in a context of reducing finances and increasing demands, the current culture and make-up of the police force does not create an environment which values and supports the development of strong police-faith relations. This is reflected in overly simplified understandings of 'everyday' faith hate crime and 'serious' faith hate crime, which does not reflect progress in the field and is problematic in improving reporting of victimisation, building confidence and providing appropriate support.

It is apparent in the findings of this chapter that legitimacy remains a key principle in policing and that relationships between policing and communities continue to be considered important in the UK policing model. However, it is clear that structural and cultural barriers to achieving greater perceptions of legitimacy and engagement with policing exist and they are more likely to impact on already marginalised groups. This has implications for faith communities in particular, where outdated approaches to engagement rely on faith community leaders and traditional infrastructures. Concerns about police-faith co-production in policing have also become apparent, which suggests further barriers for faith communities participating in policing, public safety community action or volunteering. This places restrictions on police-faith relations and reduces the potential to generate new and dynamic approaches to community policing which rely less on policing resource and more on faith community participation. Several of these themes and issues are raised in the following chapter, which discusses findings from interviews with members of faith communities, exploring their interactions, perceptions and experiences of policing.

## **Chapter Seven**

### **Faith Community Perceptions of the Police**

#### **Introduction**

Previous chapters highlight current issues which are likely to impact on police-faith relations, in particular the dominant cultures within policing, the decline of community policing and continued disproportionality and inequality in police engagement with faith communities. The review of literature presented in this thesis also demonstrates limitations in academic exploration of police-faith relations from the perspective of faith communities. The majority of work in this field specifically explores Islamophobia, anti-Semitism, extremism and terrorism associated with the far right, Middle-East or Islam. Research in these areas also tends to be undertaken in multicultural cities, which is likely to shape police-faith relations differently to 'everyday' towns and cities where diversity in faith, ethnicity and culture is often lower. This case study of a small county seeks to address this gap through in-depth, semi-structured interviews with thirty-two people from the Baha'i, Christian, Hindu, Jewish, Muslim, Quaker and Sikh faiths and one with no faith. These interviews are also supported by discussion groups involving fifteen women from the Hindu and Muslim faiths.

This chapter explores the four key themes which emerged in the findings, drawing on theories of identity, intersectionality, procedural justice and legitimacy in policing. Firstly, perceptions of policing as 'uncultured' are explored, fuelled by poor representation of diverse communities in policing and limited knowledge about faith. Secondly, a sense of 'us and them' between policing and faith communities is examined, exploring the role of bridge-builders such as community engagement officers and community leaders. Thirdly, expectations of policing are considered in relation to vulnerability and victimisation of faith communities, addressing in particular the differences between relationships at micro and macro levels. Finally, this chapter raises the potential for greater co-production between

the police and faith communities, recognising shared values and opportunities for contribution to public safety which may play a role in strengthening police-faith relations.

### **The 'Uncultured' Police**

There was consensus across participants that the vast majority of police officers have limited knowledge or understanding of different faiths. Perceptions of policing as generally white, male and with no faith or Christian faith, coupled with experiences of police officers demonstrating limited understanding of faith, led to an image of policing as 'uncultured'. Whilst this image is impactful on police-faith relations more widely, at the individual level interactions with policing which demonstrated empathy and respect played a role in improving perceptions of policing. Factors which have been shown to impact on procedural justice in policing, for example being treated fairly, with respect and having a voice (Jackson *et al.*, 2013) were reflected in this study and were found to be important in building and maintaining police-faith relations. Empathy, community involvement and legitimacy appeared to create a framework in which the importance of police knowledge and understanding of different faiths was assessed. Limited knowledge of different faiths was therefore not always identified as negative to police-faith relations at the micro level. Understanding of the wider context in which policing operates, such as financial and resourcing challenges, tended to impact on perceptions of these factors, particularly the ability to treat faith communities equally and fairly alongside tackling community-specific crime issues. At the macro level, therefore, policing was perceived to have little interest in faith in communities beyond risk of extremism.

#### *Police knowledge of faith*

The collective experiences and perceptions shared by participants presented a police force with minimal knowledge and understanding of different faiths. Beyond two dedicated community engagement officers, the vast majority of interactions with the police exposed

uninformed or ignorant dispositions and management of relationships with people of faith. Whilst maintaining current knowledge across diverse faiths and cultures was recognised as challenging and unlikely, not knowing ‘the basics’ such as misidentifying individuals wearing turbans, describing a Sikh temple as a Mosque and missing the relevance and impact of a pig head being attached to the front door of a Muslim household, were just a few examples where expectations of understanding were not met. The desire for understanding and respect for the importance of faith in identity was apparent, yet participants tended to perceive policing to ignore faith, instead focussing on ethnicity, age or geography. Despite research suggesting that faith is more important to overall perceptions of self-identity than ethnicity (Department for Communities and Local Government, 2011) institutional groupings and research addressing issues such as victim satisfaction with policing or confidence in policing tend not to report faith. This reflects literature critiquing simplistic institutional categorisation of identities, which often prioritise high level groupings and miss important aspects of identity and intersectionality of identity in experiences (Chakraborti, 2015). The impact of faith being seen to be irrelevant to policing communities did not just affect minority faith groups, but was raised by Christians also, who felt faith in identity should be recognised.

As discussed in Chapter Two, the Christian identity in Britain can be argued to hold a position of power, based on an interlocked relationship with British culture, the state and public services. Typically, therefore, individuals with Christian identity might be perceived to be afforded greater voice and influence compared to other faith identities (Fricker, 2000). However, whilst related advantages may be experienced across various aspects of social and economic life, growing secularism in policing and public services has generated a less ‘advantaged’ experience for all faiths, including Christians. This supports the argument that secularism in central policing policy has skewed policing approaches to use universally-applicable engagement tactics in line with ‘equality and diversity’ policy (Lambert, 2008). Whilst secularism in policing is likely to be understood as a contributor to equality, it fails to encourage police engagement with faith communities in ways which

might facilitate recognition of faith in identity. The impact of faith feeling irrelevant to the policing of communities beyond its' role in criminality was therefore felt across groups:

*Their understanding of Christianity will probably be that it's not one to get enthusiastic about or committed to. It doesn't affect your life much, doesn't affect your finances, your activities, relationships much, other than if you are an extremist.*

*Jenny, Christian*

The decline in community engagement, particularly the reduction in informal engagement with PCSOs, was felt to be a significant factor in limited police interest in faith communities. By reducing engagement with faith communities, beyond specific occurrences of victimisation or offending behaviour, police-faith relations have been skewed to specific issues and contexts. This is likely to impact on knowledge and understanding of diverse faith communities, particularly where community engagement and related skills are undervalued by the wider policing culture (Corsianos, 2011). The role of the PCSO has also been shown to have shifted away from community engagement and towards crime control, which has reduced community policing in the UK (Cosgrove, 2015; Cosgrove and Ramshaw, 2015). The reduced visibility of PCSOs and police officers described by participants in this study contributed to their perceptions of policing as 'uncultured'. This image was exacerbated by limited diversity in ethnicity and faith in policing, discussed in the next section, which arguably becomes increasingly challenging with reduced visibility of police officers in communities.

### *Police representation*

The importance of the police reflecting the communities they serve was emphasised in the findings and was often related to perceptions of increasing diversity in communities through immigration. Arguments for diverse faith and cultural backgrounds in policing tended to reflect the need for institutional openness to difference and greater challenge to

bias and prejudice. As reflected in the Scarman (1981) and Macpherson (1999) reports and recommendations, increased diversity in policing is perceived to be an important factor in encouraging institutional culture change and improved understanding of diversity in communities (Cashmore, 2002; McLaughlin, 2007). However, participants also presented some concern about 'quota boxes', 'positive discrimination' and 'tick box exercises' which threatened to bring people into policing without the appropriate skills or abilities. This issue appeared to perplex most participants, where the dichotomy between under-representation and unfair recruitment processes was not readily resolved. Diversifying policing was felt to be important due to its potential to encourage learning and understanding across police officers, rather than to explicitly facilitate police-faith relations:

*Somalian officers would build confidence in the Muslim community but only if they know his role as a police officer first and use it to improve all community relationships. Not just a focus on Somalian relationships or issues, otherwise it's just another way that divides us as different from others.*

*Haleem, Muslim*

*I ideally would love to see more people from not just the Hindu faith but from right across different communities. One of the biggest benefits of having people from those communities is they bring that wealth of knowledge and understanding that will fill a big vacuum within the police.*

*Meera, Hindu*

The image of the police service as mostly white, male and with either no faith or Christian faith, led to a perception that the majority of people in policing are likely to have had limited exposure to different faiths. This reflects the challenges of identity and intersectionality in policing and the difficulty of disassociating from national and institutional cultures and prejudices (Millings, 2013). Assumptions are therefore made about police officer identities, which often ignore unknown aspects of identity, such as their individual experience of

diversity or victimisation, for example. The ability for policing to demonstrate cultural understanding of diverse communities and experiences is important to police-faith relations at both the micro individual level and at the macro level as an institution. There was a perception that personal experience of difference could facilitate institutional learning and understanding and increasing diversity in policing could accelerate this process. The quote below presents this view:

*Those officers share their experiences as to any discrimination they face, any racism, any dangers they face. They make it real that it is an aspect of life...a walk in the street just as a human being, will attract attention from the wrong crowd just because of our identity.*

*Ravi, Sikh*

Language barriers, poor education and social disadvantage were considered factors in the challenge to recruit individuals from minority faith and ethnic backgrounds into policing. Whilst some participants reflected on the corrupt, poorly paid, unprofessional and disliked police forces in their country of origin, none of them felt this perception of the police elsewhere impacted on theirs or their children's willingness to join the police in the UK. This goes against the findings from police perspectives discussed in the previous chapter, where perceptions of corruption in policing in other countries was considered to be a key barrier to policing as a choice profession. Some referenced the culture of the police in the UK and the recent history of 'institutional racism' as potential barriers to individuals from black, minority ethnic and diverse faith communities to join policing. In this sense, diversity in policing appeared to symbolise its cultural insight and openness to diversity and difference both internally and externally, as reflected in academic thinking (Loftus, 2009). One interviewee powerfully presents this need from communities:

*[We want to know] that we have got police support and the police are aware that we feel under the cosh right now, 'we know that there are national issues going on right now and we want to reassure you that we've got your back. If*

*the sisters are worried because people are pulling on their hijabs and spitting on them, or the way my sister was abused a day and a half ago, that we will follow it up'. I think that would work better than just throwing another minority into a police uniform and saying 'just show your face around so they all know we've got a couple of you guys around'.* Abdul, Muslim

Diversity in policing has emerged as important in perceptions of policing as a 'cultured' institution which is able to understand specific community needs, as opposed to the diversification itself contributing to police-faith relations. Under the procedural justice model, this could be considered a factor within perceptions of fairness and understanding decision-making in policing (Jackson, *et al.*, 2013; Huq, *et al.*, 2011; Tyler *et al.*, 2010). It is evident that faith communities want their specific needs and experiences to be understood and to feel that their communities are represented and valued in policing approaches and responses. This reflects discussion in Chapter Two, where achieving perceptions of legitimacy in policing is argued to provide the moral authority required to deliver regulation with the support of the public (Jackson *et al.*, 2013). This brings police fairness into focus, recognising the significant relationship between fairness and legitimacy (Roberts and Herrington, 2013) and a key theme raised in the findings of this study.

### *Police fairness*

Contextual factors including austerity measures, reducing police officer numbers, increasing immigration and perceived increases in complex crime problems tended to frame perceptions of fairness in policing. Assumptions about police time being directed towards those most likely to be perpetrators or victims of crime were related to lower expectations of equal engagement across faith communities. In particular, recognition of both the threat posed by extremism in Islam and the significant hate crime victimisation experienced by Muslim communities, generated understanding about increased policing resources directed towards those communities. Stereotypes about collective identities



related to their own faiths often prompted comparisons between faith groups, for example 'well us in the Christian community tend not to be a problem', 'the focus will be on Muslims at the moment and I understand that' and 'Hindus are peaceful, we rarely need the police'. The experience of 'othering', harassment and violence targeted towards specific communities can increase solidarity amongst the community affected, but can also contribute to withdrawal and isolation from other groups (Perry, 2015). The role of targeted prejudice and stereotyping towards communities, in particular Muslim and Jewish communities, is therefore likely to have impacted wider relationships between faith communities.

The on-going targeted police attention towards Muslim communities for over a decade was a key theme in assessments of the fairness of policing. In line with the theory behind the procedural justice model, there was understanding about police processes and decision-making regarding the need to protect people from the terrorist threat posed by Islamic extremists. Overall assessments of police activity and confidence in policing are significantly related to understanding the reasons behind policing approaches (Jackson *et al.*, 2013; Wells, 2007; Tyler, 2005). The role of the government, national policy and the media in exacerbating perceptions of the policing of Muslim communities were identified as damaging to police-faith relations at the macro level. However, a distinction was made between national policy and local policing, which demonstrates the potential impact of procedural justice and the power of local relationships. The Prevent policy was understood as a government policy and almost forced on policing, rather than the choices of individual officers or local teams to target Muslim communities:

*It's national policy that says the police have to do it, which was the whole thing with the Prevent Agenda, it was seen as an anti-Muslim piece of legislation.*

*Edward, Christian*

The impact of national policy is reflected in several studies addressing the experience of Muslims in the UK and the 'questions of voice, legitimacy and power' that are raised due to the constraints placed on this group were evident in this study also (Husband and Allam, 2011:204). National and international incidents were regularly referenced by participants when using examples to explain the threat and pressure on specific communities. Recent incidents in France and the on-going terrorism and conflict in Syria, Israel and Palestine, were regularly used by participants as a rationale for the police focus on 'communities at risk':

*Obviously the Muslim community at the moment is under investigation and you know the awful events in Paris last weekend...the Jewish community presumably feels quite under threat because of the Charlie Hebdo<sup>5</sup> thing earlier in the year, so all of those communities will be under some sort of conflict and pressure.*

*Keith, Atheist*

The long term strategic impact of the targeted police attention towards Muslim communities under counter-terrorism policing has been interpreted positively by some. Opportunities for increased and in-depth engagement between policing and Muslim communities were felt by some to have created new relationships with communities previously unengaged or disengaged. It was also felt that policing had an improved understanding of Muslim communities as a result of intensive engagement. Whilst this perspective is not widely recognised in academic study, the principle of policing recognising the importance of engaging with faith communities is identified as an opportunity to drive police-faith relations beyond skewed counter-terrorism agendas (McFayden and Prideaux, 2014). This perspective was often caveated with the need for transparency and fairness in

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<sup>5</sup> During 2015 six events in France were considered to be related to Islamist militants and 'Islamic State', most notably the 7-9th January attacks on the magazine 'Charlie Hebdo' offices killing 12 people including the editor and celebrated cartoonists, a policewoman was murdered and a Jewish supermarket was attacked, killing four people. Also on 13-14<sup>th</sup> November gunmen and suicide bombers attacked a concert hall, a major stadium, restaurants and bars in Paris, leaving 130 people dead and hundreds more wounded.

police actions, reflecting the key principles of the procedural justice model (Jackson *et al.*, 2013). However, moving beyond procedural justice as a driver of legitimacy, high quality and effective policing was identified as important to the Muslim community in particular. In this sense, recognition of the positive impact of police engagement with Muslim communities required improved policing responses to vulnerability and victimisation also:

*The police will build trust with the Muslim community when they respond quickly and properly to issues. They communicate more now, they have more knowledge now, but they need to respond and investigate well, and achieve justice.*

*Haleem, Muslim*

This need for effective policing alongside fairness and equality in police treatment of communities was reflected in a discussion amongst Muslim women. Their experiences of faith hate crime and hostility in their local area were extensive. They perceived the police response to faith hate crime as weak, under-resourced and unfair. This perception of unfairness was explained in the context of the issue, recognising that the majority of their experiences of targeted hostility and hate crime had been ongoing for ten to fifteen years. Police investment in prevention and investigation of their victimisation was considered poor in comparison to the investment in investigating radicalisation in Muslim communities, a view reflected widely in literature (Millings, 2013; Chakraborti, 2012; Husband and Allam, 2011; Spalek, 2011; Pantazis and Pemberton, 2009; McGhee, 2008). In this respect, perceptions of procedural justice in the police were low, participants felt uninformed about why and how the police take decisions to respond to their victimisation and found their own reasons to explain police actions. The following caption of discussion reflects these views and the frustration felt by these women:

*They should make an effort – find out who the bus drivers are, find out which school kids are causing the problems, everyone knows, then get the police to go and talk to the group and do something about it. It can't all be down to us.*

*We need to do restorative practice with people like this, that are verbally aggressive and rude, get them to understand their impact and to face up to their bullying behaviour.*

*It needs immediate involvement and action, there and then these people need challenging for their prejudice and their behaviour.*

*But what can the police do?!*

*Any police action sends a message, shows that it's not right, abuse and swearing and all that isn't allowed.*

*Muslim women discussion group*

It became apparent that assessments of police fairness in the policing of faith communities were considered in relation to the specific experiences and contexts of individuals and groups, as opposed to comparisons between groups. In this respect, participants did not suggest that they were treated differently due to their faith, but that the police were limited in their capability and capacity to deal with the victimisation they experience, or that it was not prioritised by policing.

However, the perceptions of white Christians counters this slightly, suggesting that police responses can be shaped by stereotypes based on ethnicity and faith in identity. In the words of one participant, 'white Christians won't kick up a fuss'. This perception that policing prioritises responding to issues raised by black and minority ethnic groups and faith groups associated with these ethnicities, over and above white Christians, was reflected across a number of participants. This supports the challenge discussed in the previous chapter, that police-faith relations are largely considered within a framework of risk, focussing on avoidance of discrimination (McFayden and Prideaux, 2014). For some, faiths associated with black and minority ethnic backgrounds were more likely to both demand

and receive a specific level of service from policing, related to their elevated 'minority status' from which to highlight unequal, unfair or disproportionate police treatment. This suggests a dichotomy between arguments about heightened concerns about 'political correctness' in policing and the need to challenge inherent marginalisation and disempowerment of minority groups. The vast majority of literature in the field would argue that white Christians are most likely to occupy positions of power which afford them greater voice, influence, visibility, financial and political support (Chakraborti, 2015; Spalek, 2008; Fricker, 2000). The following extract presents these views, demonstrating a perception that a stereotype of a Christian identity exists which impacts on police recognition of their experiences:

*Christians don't do anything do they, they just let you get on with it and they go quiet in the corner, whereas if you were to [disrespect] another faith they might actually do something about it and 'oh we don't want to do that'.*

*Edward, Christian*

*I just think sometimes, I wonder if you'd have been a bit more sensitive around Mohammed or Buddha, I think you would have switched on. I don't want to join the bandwagon and be victimised round this, but for me a Christian, God, Jesus and Mary whoever is in that association, seems to be more okay to ridicule and be prejudice towards Christians than it is towards Muslims. There is less of a fear of sanctions to do that with Christians and I get it all the time, I would say on a weekly basis.*

*Emma, Christian*

Several factors have been shown to impact on assessments of police fairness in the treatment of faith communities, highlighting in particular the need for understanding police decisions and actions. Whilst dominated by issues relating to the treatment of Muslim communities in recent years, more broadly faith communities recognised that their identity plays a role in their relationships with policing and that this differs between groups and

needs. These findings support the concept that empathy, involvement and legitimacy drive police-faith relations, highlighting the need for understanding the specificity of experiences between groups, equality in involvement across groups and legitimate policing responses.

The 'uncultured' police image emerged as a result of inadequate understanding and engagement with faith in communities, exacerbated by declining community engagement. As reflected in the previous chapter, the role of police culture in directing limited resources towards enforcement activities over engagement work, resonates with the experience of faith communities, which suggests minimal police interest in faith or faith community experience. The role of political correctness and risk aversion in police treatment of diverse faith communities supports the 'uncultured' descriptor, demonstrating distance between policing and the communities it serves. An 'us and them' perception emerged across faith communities, which is explored in the next section, fuelled by a sense of difference, police discomfort with faith in policing and the limited investment in specialist skills and knowledge to facilitate police-faith relations.

### **Bridging the 'Us and Them'**

Different dimensions to police-faith relations became apparent in the findings, which sensibly drew distinctions between roles in policing, particularly 'response' police officers, which make up the vast majority of policing, Police Community Support Officers (PCSOs) and 'specialist' community engagement officers. Relationships with 'response' officers, due to the nature of their roles in responding to calls for service and managing incidents and crimes, were described as relatively weak and, as discussed earlier, this group of officers were those perceived to be least knowledgeable about faith communities and different cultures. There was little identification with 'the police are the public and the public are the police' ideology, instead a sense of 'us and them' prevailed, based primarily on 'response' policing roles. The reduction in PCSOs and the shift away from community engagement towards enforcement focussed activity was identified by faith communities, reflecting

wider studies (Cosgrove, 2015; Cosgrove and Ramshaw, 2015). The community engagement officer role, of which there were only two individuals in the police service covering the county, had developed strong and trusting relationships with the 'community leaders' identified in this study. The impact of these specific policing roles was clear in the development of personal, trusting relationships and bridging the gap between active individuals in faith communities and the wider police service. 'Community leader' roles, whilst often not self-identified or labelled, were explored as both enablers and blockers to effective police engagement with faith communities and tended to be viewed as 'cornerstones' in ensuring community voices are heard by policing leaders. Building relationships with the wider police service was found to be problematic due to the impact of austerity on police resources, the marginalisation of faith communities in a secular society and a police culture which seeks to 'keep the faith thing low key'.

#### *Specialist community engagement officers*

The key principles of the procedural justice model of policing, and community policing more broadly, were evident in perceptions of the two police community engagement officers. Securing consent and access to diverse communities was achieved through equality of engagement across groups, good interpersonal skills, knowledge and understanding of diverse faiths and cultures and respect for difference (Hough *et al.*, 2013; Roberts and Herrington, 2013; Jackson *et al.*, 2013; Corsianos, 2011). For many, these two roles provided a positive connection with the police during times when relationships with neighbourhood policing teams and response officers had broken down. For example, in the context of faith hate victimisation and counter-terrorism initiatives, the community engagement officers provided information, explanations and influenced wider policing approaches and responses to support those affected. The following extracts illustrate the importance of the personal dimension to developing relationships:

*The fact that those relationships have almost become personal, there is that element of trust...you just can't train the whole force to even get close to that level of knowledge and experience. The fact that we have got good relationships generally speaking between the Muslim community and the police is because of individual personal relationships.* *Israr, Muslim*

*So he left his kids at home and he came down and he walked back with the Rabbi and I up to the Synagogue and that was a personal choice of his. I didn't ask him to, he offered and that shows me the sort of respect he's got for our community and the respect that we've got for him and that to me is worth a fortune.* *Matthew, Jewish*

These roles reflect the ethos behind genuine community policing, focussing on building strong relationships and taking an approach which is responsive to community demands, problems and priorities (Skogan and Hartnett, 2005). Participants depicted a change in community policing over the last ten years, observing a reduction in police patrol and 'bobbies on the beat'. Limited visibility of senior police officers was also identified as a shift in the connection between policing and communities, demonstrating the distance described earlier between policing and faith. The community engagement officers were described as 'bridge builders', facilitating the engagement of communities least likely to access, participate or connect with policing more broadly:

*If I talk from the faith community perspective, they are an excellent bridge between the police and the communities, because people may not know other police officers but they do know the community liaison officers [they] work very hard to forge those links and maintain those connections in a very positive way.* *Meera, Hindu*



The distinction between community engagement officers and wider policing roles appeared to symbolise the systemic separation between policing and faith communities. Perceptions of policing and police-faith relations beyond community engagement officers and PCSOs drew on the growing secularisation of society and the increasing politicisation of the police. For example, participants identified the political needs for policing to represent the needs and concerns of the majority rather than the minority, and faith is increasingly perceived to be diminishing in UK society (McFayden and Prideaux, 2014; Park *et al.*, 2011). Policing as an institution could therefore be seen to be disconnected from faith communities in ways which garner recognition in society:

*I think on a ground level it's excellent, we tend to find it gets a little bit more complicated the further up the chain you go.* Steve, Christian

*I think the public see the police force as being very separate and very different to them and I think it's almost like Clergy. That people see the police as being 'other' than them and they see Clergy as being 'other' than them as well, because it is a vocation.* Beth, Christian

Whilst it is evident that the community engagement officer roles provide a valuable connection between faith communities and the police service, the reach and sustainability of this approach raised concerns. Increasing diversity in communities and greater recognition of hidden crime such as child sexual abuse, female genital mutilation and honour-based violence, for example, were identified as placing increasing demand on police engagement with communities. The demarcation between police-faith relations with specialist community engagement officers and the wider policing institution suggests a need for investment in approaches to build perceptions of legitimacy at macro as well as micro levels of police-faith relations. In the same vein as community engagement officers being seen to be 'bridge-builders' within policing, 'community leaders' were perceived to play a significant role in connections between faith communities and policing. In particular,

their ability to build legitimacy in both communities and in policing as credible ‘go-betweens’ provided a positive assessment of their role in bridging the gap between policing and faith communities.

### *Community leaders*

Ten of the participants in this study were labelled ‘community leaders’ by the police and others in voluntary and community sector roles. Three participants identified themselves as community leaders, based on very clear roles, responsibilities and titles within their faith and community infrastructure. Others described themselves as ‘committed volunteers’ in their communities with strong relationships, trust, language translation skills and knowledge of relevant policies and practices across public service. Motivating factors to volunteer in this way appeared to be centred on the need to ‘give voice to the community’, ‘helping those in need’, ‘challenging the system’ and ‘sharing important messages’. The following extract illustrates this view:

*I don't describe myself as a community leader, a community-supporter maybe.  
I like to help people or find others who can help them to solve issues in a peaceful  
way. I give our community a voice when they struggle, they call me.*

*Haleem, Muslim*

*I'm a servant, remaining humble is a key principle in Sikhism.*

*Salma, Sikh*

The status of the community leader construct was often described negatively, associated with pride, personal gain or authority, and was rejected by the majority. Some participants gave indications that they had either been criticised, or felt criticised, for being labelled this way and were aware of the challenges against community leader roles. The problematic nature of representing diverse communities and communities within communities were

evident, recognising that specific identities, needs and experiences can be obscured or diluted by the collective majority (Chakraborti, 2015; Spalek, 2008). The participants in this study identified as community leaders tended to be invited to community meetings, police scrutiny panels or groups and to contribute to consultations on new policy or practice. This reflects the pressure and demand for institutions to close the gap between policy makers and communities impacted by those policies (Prior *et al.*, 2006). Any representation of communities within those spaces can therefore be criticised against their ability to understand and share the views of multiple identities and experiences in their communities. The construct of the community leader role was evidently problematic for participants under this label, who rejected the restrictive, biased or authoritarian criticisms and focussed on tackling broader marginalisation and disempowerment of their communities.

Participants drew on identity-related arguments to evidence their non-status as a 'leader', making statements such as 'I'm not appointed', 'I haven't been elected', 'I'm not a leader, I'm a volunteer' and 'nobody has to go through me, I just help'. They described a willingness and ability to provide a bridge between the police and those least likely to engage without encouragement, help or support. In particular, they provided emotional and practical aid, including transport and language translation, to facilitate reporting victimisation, fulfilling witness duties and participating in community problem solving. The quotation below is illustrative of the conflicting views of the role, shared by an atheist who interacts regularly with faith communities through voluntary work:

*I think some of that [title] has been put on me, as well as wanting to do it...I suppose around LGBT issues I found myself becoming the spokesman a lot of the time...but in the same way I think some faith leaders get turned to with a knee jerk reaction - 'let's go and speak to so and so about this' rather than getting a wider perspective and I think I'm probably guilty of that, I'm sure I have my own bias.*

*Keith, Atheist*

There was a strong feeling amongst participants that members of their communities need help navigating police and public services, particularly during complex experiences of victimisation or investigation. Several examples were given where such support was provided, including cases of domestic and sexual violence victimisation, a number of incidents in schools where children were assessed for risk of radicalisation and experiences of faith hate crime. In all examples, participants described language translation, attending meetings with the police, school head teachers and support services to help explain processes and procedures, to ensure the community members were treated fairly and listened to. These themes of advocacy and support were common in descriptions of activities undertaken by participants and as the quotation below presents, seemed to provide opportunities to 'act' on their faith:

*Male domestic violence situations are even more shameful in my community, for a man to say 'I'm suffering here', [but he] confided in me. It is very limited what I can do because I do all this as a volunteer...I always say to people 'just ring me it doesn't matter what time, if you need help and can't cope, just give me a call'. As a Hindu, Karma is the most important element for me...that is the real income I earn.*

*Meera, Hindu*

The importance of intersectionality of identity for community leaders was evident and often provided a rationale or explanation for their ability to bridge gaps in accessibility, understanding and confidence between individuals in their communities and the police. Statements such as 'being an Asian, Sikh, woman', 'being a younger Muslim man' and 'as a new wearer of the hijab' appeared to provide confidence, trust and empathy, which encouraged and facilitated communication. Participants implied that these specific aspects of their identities created the opportunities for community members to seek their help and support. These views support the idea that the 'community leader' label is quite often given by community members or by institutions, rather than 'owned' personally by the individual. These findings reflect suggestions that shared intersects of identity can play a significant

role in solidarity in communities and community relationships, which can increase mobilisation in marginalised communities (Perry, 2015). One of the key challenges to the mobilisation of faith communities in policing was increasing 'political correctness', also identified as increasing secularism, which seemed to render policing uncomfortable in visibly supporting police-faith relations and faith-related crime prevention. The following section explores this issue, drawing on assessments of police culture and behaviour in engaging with faith communities.

### *Keeping the 'faith thing' low key*

Minimising faith in identity during interactions with policing was apparent across participants, particularly those more active in community activities. Situations included engagement with the police through voluntary activities such as street patrol or youth engagement, attending community meetings and police surgeries and provision of support services to victims and perpetrators. Some participants felt the 'political correctness' of the police had marginalised their contribution and their ability to speak freely about the drivers behind their community work. A number of participants felt their status as 'volunteers' should enable them to express themselves honestly and with integrity. However, in their experiences of engagement with policing, the vast majority of police officers demonstrated discomfort with displays of personal faith, arguably considering religion to be an aspect of social life that must be kept separate from the state and public services (Modood, 2010). An atheist participant supported this view, suggesting that it is inappropriate to have prayers at community meetings for example, emphasising the challenges in meeting the differing needs of all individuals around the table. The following extract illustrates the views held about 'public' and 'private' faith and the conflict this can create:

*There's a real pressure in society, that for me as a Christian and my faith community is 'keep your views to yourself thank you, this is a private thing not a public thing' and then you get things like people shouldn't pray before*

*meetings, 'we don't want public expressions of this'...well what a load of nonsense, this country is built on freedom of expression.*

*Adrian, Christian*

Key themes in the explanations shared by participants for their wish to express their faith freely, were the desire to be true to themselves, recognising the 'impossibility' of 'separating me from my faith' and sharing their drivers for volunteering. Prayers, readings and reflections were felt to be important in focussing the mind of the individual on the issue at hand and to bring collectives of people together to 'be active in their faith'. The following quote reflects a number of participants' feelings about the difficulty of having faith in a secular society:

*I think people do feel a little demonised as the result of having a faith. It could be that they may feel it is synonymous with no logic or reason, unscientific...Having faith in a secular society is a very difficult thing, but it's at my core so it is very difficult to put that whole part of my being to one side in the way that I am expected to.*

*Emma, Christian*

Talking about faith in the presence of the police was felt to create a barrier, causing officers to retreat, which inevitably affected relationships. Participants involved in the Christian Street Pastors initiative talked about managing their communication with the police by minimising the mention of faith. They described 'saying prayers in my head' and 'not even letting it show on my face, never shutting my eyes or lowering my gaze' to conceal their faith and ensure it 'wasn't shoved in the face of officers'. By minimising reference to faith, they were reducing the 'difference' between them and the opportunities for the police to perceive them to be 'different':

*Sometimes it's tricky talking about religion, the dreaded 'r' word, you know it's so much easier to just leave it out sometimes.*

*Rachel, Baha'i*

When exploring the reasons why participants felt the police might be uncomfortable discussing or observing faith-related activities, particularly in the context of voluntary community initiatives, themes of secularisation and marginalisation developed. The majority of participants talked about the reduction of religiosity in the UK over the past fifty years and the growing 'political correctness' which drives secularisation across public services and institutions. Many participants demonstrated feelings of anger, frustration and concern at these trends, explaining that faith communities still exist and form an important part of society. Three participants specifically referenced the Census, stating that up to seventy percent of the population of the UK identifies with a faith and therefore public services need to continue engaging, identifying needs and working with those communities to achieve community cohesion and safety. One participant stated, 'we have glorified ghettos of communities' and 'we need to stop pretending multiculturalism has worked'. Perceptions of the marginalisation of faith in society and strained relationships between communities evidently impacted on experiences of police recognition, or mis-recognition, of faith groups and identities. These views reflect discussion in Chapter Four, where the ability of the police to 'evoke, affirm, reinforce or (even) undermine social relations' allows the police to play a significant role in defining the order social groups and communities (Loader and Mulcahy 2003:39). These perceptions also support the concept of the 'cultural work' of policing (Fraser, 1995; 2000; 2003) which suggests that 'the police are a social institution with whom recognition must be negotiated' (Fraser 2000:114).

The challenges of policing multiculturalism, discussed in Chapter Three, raised the view that the separation of the state and religion is not necessary and can be inhibitive towards community cohesion agendas (Modood, 2010). Participants presented views which strongly supported this position, particularly in relation to policing which was viewed as reliant upon extensive relationships with the public. One theme within this debate suggests that too much diversity undermines social cohesion due to the loss of common values (Alibhai-Brown, 2004; Goodhard, 2004). 'Celebrating diversity' was a shared ethos across participants and the majority referenced the local 'interfaith forum' in particular and the

success it had achieved locally to bring faith communities together. This forum has created space for both diversity and collectivity, which was deeply valued. One participant expressed the need for interfaith dialogue due to the actions of those supporting secularisation and the impact of the multiculturalism agenda:

*There's quite a militancy in non-faith circles to try and get faith voices silenced... 'Community' is not helped by fragmentation and we had this whole thing of community cohesion in the last government...I don't think this 'multiculturalism' has helped the nation one bit.* *Adrian, Christian*

The marginalisation of faith communities by the state and public services is a key concern in police-faith relations and is not directly addressed in academic study. The distinction between micro level relationships in local neighbourhoods, compared to macro perceptions of policing as an institution and a representation of the state, raise questions about what is required for long-term relationships between policing and faith communities. While 'specialists' in policing are relied upon to understand and engage with diverse communities, wider improvement in faith and cultural awareness and understanding in policing appears unlikely. Community leaders play an important role in bridging this broader sense of 'us and them', which could achieve greater recognition of minority communities in policing if cultural challenges of political correctness and risk aversion are overcome. These challenges become increasingly problematic in the context of faith hate crime, where low levels of reporting victimisation to the police, and difficulty achieving justice outcomes, require greater trust, confidence and perceptions of legitimacy in policing. These issues are explored in the following section, under discussion about the role of vulnerability and victimisation in police-faith relations.



## **Vulnerability and Victimisation**

Faith hate crime has a significant impact on individuals and communities and more broadly on community relationships, both increasing solidarity within groups and creating distance between 'other' groups (Perry, 2015). This creates challenges for policing, where the true extent of the impact of victimisation is largely unknown (Chakraborti, 2015) and can be exacerbated by national and international conflict and events (Giannasi, 2015). Participants in this study were not identified on the basis of victimisation or existing interaction with the police, but inevitably a number of participants had experienced crime, including faith hate crime. More broadly, experiences of being 'othered' affected community relationships and expectations of policing. Perceptions of disinvestment in specialist policing resources to identify, tackle and prevent faith hate crime had a significant impact on feelings of value, recognition and protection for faith communities. Whilst victimisation amongst Muslim communities dominated discussions across faith groups, the collective identification with 'faith' in identity created concerns about risk of targeted victimisation and under-protection from policing. In particular, reflections on vulnerability and victimisation centred on the marginalisation of faith communities in wider society, the impact of international events and limitations in police prioritisation and resourcing to prevent faith hate crime and to support victims.

### *Faith hate crime*

All participants talked about targeted hate crime, hostility, verbal abuse or feeling vulnerable in relation to personal experience or the experience of friends, family and local community members. For some these experiences were a daily occurrence, reflecting the experiences of Muslim participants in particular (Hall, 2015; Zempi and Chakraborti, 2014). Across faith groups there was a sense of resignation to the experience of hostility and prejudice and often a pragmatic approach to police involvement, aligned to the severity of the incident, as reflected in other studies (Giannasi, 2015). Amongst Muslim, Hindu and

Sikh participants, descriptions of faith hate crime and targeted hostility tended to involve public spaces, strangers or neighbours and verbal abuse. Amongst Christian and Jewish participants their experiences tended to be in the workplace or structured community activities. For Quaker and Baha'i participants, the knowledge of hostility towards their faith nationally or internationally caused feelings of vulnerability at a scale bigger than the individual, reflecting thinking about the impact of hate crime which may have root causes in historic conflict (Hall, 2015). The two quotes presented below demonstrate some of these descriptions:

*I also think there's a huge fear around committed Christians because they think we are extremists. There are times where I have been called a Bible basher and been marginalised.*

*Jenny, Christian*

*I joined a leisure class last year, went along once and a woman there realised I was Jewish and stopped talking to me, looking at me, made things difficult.*

*The tutor realised and kicked her out.*

*Alice, Jewish*

The experience of victimisation through being 'visible' and 'exposed' was described by a number of participants as particularly challenging. There was a strong feeling of contradiction amongst these participants, being both proud of their identity but also feeling the need to explain themselves as 'normal'. The visible identifiers, for example the turban, hijab or niqab, cultural dress or uniform, as well as race and ethnicity, were described by participants as exposing indicators of identity. Largely affecting individuals identified as Muslim, although several were Sikh and Hindu, this reflects hate crime literature exploring Islamophobia (Zempi and Chakraborti, 2014; Allen, 2014; Millings, 2013; Allen, 2010). The two extracts below reflect these experiences and the feeling of pressure to 'explain themselves':

*My brother and sister-in-law have a very small business...about two months ago somebody wrapped a rasher of bacon around the front door handle and left them a note. Obviously they had worked out that they were Muslims.*

*Israr, Muslim*

*We almost have to pacify the public to say look 'I'm a Muslim but it's okay, I'm a normal Muslim, I'm one of you guys, I watch football on a Saturday night, I like to take my son out to the park.*

*Aasif, Muslim*

Participants drew on experiences of difference and prejudice to describe their feelings of vulnerability and to explain the behaviour of others towards them. The discussion presented below between Muslim women reflects many of the descriptions of victimisation within this community and the impact on their perceptions of citizenship, community and vulnerability:

*It's the rejection of it, Muslims being targeted, your initial reaction every time is that you're not welcome here.*

*I have to work harder to initiate conversations with new people, at play group, at the dentist, wherever, there is a cold welcome, you just know you are being looked at differently, treated differently.*

*And Mina, she had her niqab pulled off her face when she was leaving a funeral, they took her phone so she couldn't record it and stamped on it. The police responded and investigated, but it changed her.*

*Muslim women discussion group*

The prevalence of physical attacks and persistent verbal abuse was higher in the stories told by Muslim participants, which they described as the backlash from extremist Islamic terrorism and the impact of corrupt media. The role of the police in the Prevent counter-terrorism work and their focus on the Muslim community was not referenced as a factor in the divides in communities and prevalence of Islamophobia, as it is in wider literature (Millings, 2013; McGhee, 2010; Tyler *et al.*, 2010; Pantazis and Pemberton, 2009; Spalek and McDonald, 2009). Instead, the focus was on the impact of Islamic extremism and the fear this creates across communities. The marginalisation that has grown for Muslim communities in various aspects of social and economic life appeared to include policing as a representation of the state rather than a stand-alone institution. This reflects previous work which recognises the intersectionality of policing, racism, ethnicity and citizenship in the impact of hate crime for Muslim communities (Millings, 2013). For these participants, their relationships with policing were evidently impacted by their experiences of victimisation. However, many similarities with other faith groups became apparent in their descriptions of interactions with policing, which brought focus to the role of specialist police officers and those skilled in dealing with community engagement and hate crime. These experiences tended to reflect the wider findings across groups, which highlight the lack of knowledge, understanding or empathy amongst non-specialist police roles such as neighbourhood policing or response teams. The role of dedicated officers was underlined as significant to positive experiences of policing, reflected across this thesis.

More broadly, the impact of bias, prejudice and community hostility described across faith groups related to perceptions of citizenship and ability to participate in policing. The role of 'specialist' community engagement officers and hate crime officers in policing were perceived to play an important role as a link between those on the margins of society and the protection and services they are entitled to. The following section explores these roles in detail and highlights the evidence of procedural justice and legitimacy in building positive and strong police-faith relations in the context of vulnerability and victimisation.

### *Dedicated police specialists*

Experiences of verbal abuse, hostile treatment and being spat at in the street were examples of incidents which were routinely not reported to the police. Offensive graffiti, attempted break-ins and targeted hostility towards the Synagogue, Mosques and Gurdwaras, and violent crimes such as physical attacks and pulling off the hijab were reported. Reasons for reluctance to report incidents to the police aligned with previous research, highlighting seriousness of the incident, the regularity or volume of incidents, fear of reprisal and language barriers (Giannasi, 2015; James, 2014; Hall, 2013). The role of specialist community engagement officers and police hate crime officers in increasing willingness to report faith hate crime and to participate in justice processes was emphasised by several participants. Their knowledge, skills and abilities to empathise with victims, build trust and mutual respect and to treat people fairly, demonstrate the procedural justice model of policing in practice (Mazerolle *et al.*, 2013; Murphy *et al.*, 2008; Tyler, 2008; Reisig *et al.*, 2007). The disbandment of the dedicated police hate crime unit just months prior to this research study therefore had a significant impact on faith community members who had experienced victimisation or were actively involved with policing.

In addition to the reasons provided above regarding unwillingness to report faith hate crime to the police, participants also described a reluctance to acknowledge prejudice or abuse, refusal to 'give it headspace' or to 'go through it again by thinking about it'. The role of specialists in policing was raised specifically in relation to the type of help needed for victims and communities affected in this way. It was recognised across participants that if incidents are not reported to the police then their victimisation goes unknown and unrecognised. However, the challenges in practice in encouraging victims to acknowledge their experiences and to liaise with the police, was perceived to place significant pressure on those affected:

*It happens all the time. All the women I know pretty much, everyone experiences something but doesn't talk about it, doesn't want to acknowledge it, doesn't bring it up.*

*Parvina, a Somali sister, she was getting it all the time where she lived, an abusive man always at the bus stop on her street. She stopped reporting it to the police when they didn't do anything, she lost all faith and trust in the police because they didn't respond. She's changed, she doesn't go out much.*

#### *Muslim women discussion group*

These experiences reflect the concept of 'everyday hate' (Iganski, 2008) which recognises that some individuals own sense of identity and belonging can also give them a sense of power or rights over and above others (Perry, 2005). Where this use of power is unchallenged by the majority, the state or those with authority, it can feel legitimised (Perry, 2001; Fricker, 2000). In relation to these experiences, participants identified the challenge to policing to effectively tackle or prevent hate crime, where limited evidence is captured and victims can be unwilling to 'bother' with police processes which often yield very little. However, over and above those experiences of victimisation and frustration with policing and justice processes, the disinvestment in the dedicated policing of hate crime symbolised a disinvestment in challenging bias and prejudice in society. Whilst the difficulties of policing hate crime were understood by faith communities, the removal of 'experts' to tackle these difficulties was felt to be dismissive of hate crime and dismissive of those affected by hate crime.

The way in which the decision to disband the hate crime unit was taken in policing also contradicted the principles of the procedural justice model; lacking transparency, consultation and explanation. Participants shared deep concerns about the police ambition to create 'omni-competent police officers' which effectively shares the responsibility for

policing hate crime across wider neighbourhood and response policing teams. The challenges for policing neighbourhoods, policing terrorism and policing multiculturalism discussed in Chapter Three highlight the likely implications for police-faith relations where a lack of coherent strategy and resourcing are identified. In particular, the cultural challenges in policing where an 'it's not my job' mentality can prevail around specific issues such as hate crime (Hall, 2013) add weight to the findings from faith communities that policing is disinterested in issues of community relationships. The community policing model was evidently favoured across participants, where relationships can be built over time and officers are able to develop skills and abilities which support effective policing of hate crime:

*With [hate crime] the smallest thing that's overlooked will be a massive deal... it's about those relationships and that comes over time. You can't just have different faces coming in and out of a particular role and expect there to be rapport from the community, because you just won't have it. That's the danger with disbanding the hate crime unit, you haven't got those familiar faces to go to time and time again. They might have had training but it isn't going to be the same.*

*Israr, Muslim*

This view reflects concerns raised in the previous chapter from the perspective of police officers, where it was recognised that the constant movement of police officers in roles damages community relationships with policing. On top of this, the types of skills required to meet community needs are not readily identified in the wider policing culture, which tends to value 'real' policing approaches which focus on catching criminals, rather than community engagement (Cosgrove and Ramshaw, 2015; Loftus, 2010; McLaughlin, 2007). This perception aligns with the concept of the 'cultural work' of policing (Fraser, 2000), potentially diluting recognition of hate crime within policing and thus impacting on recognition of specific issues which often affect minority groups.

The disinvestment in hate crime specialists arguably adds weight to perceptions of policing as 'uncultured', distanced from the experiences of faith communities and failing to meet expectations of specialist support and protection. The removal of hate crime officers as an important bridge between victims and policing also places greater responsibility on the community engagement officer role and the contribution from community leaders to fill this gap. The shared values between policing and faith communities provides a platform from which to examine the opportunities for increased collaboration in the delivery of crime prevention and community support. However, as explored earlier in this chapter and in detail in the following section, this requires a significant shift in policing culture towards openness to faith and cultural diversity.

### **The Potential for Police-Faith Co-Production**

Resolving community conflict and preventing crime emerged as important shared aims underlying the relationship between faith communities and policing. Faith was often described as a key driver in leading or participating in activities to support the safety and wellbeing of others in their communities. Parallels between values and vocation in policing and in faith were drawn in ways which supported positive police-faith relations. Despite the numerous challenges raised in this thesis so far, opportunities to build collaborative community interventions between policing and faith communities appeared to be a key aim for the majority of participants. Issues of police culture and openness to diversity, disengagement from marginalised groups and the evident de-valuing of community engagement work were identified as barriers to progressing co-production in policing. However, the contextual drivers of austerity, declining community policing and increasing diversity in communities provided a sense that policing needs to recognise opportunities for greater collaboration with faith communities in order to tackle some of the challenges policing faces.



### *Shared values*

Faith-based organisations make a significant contribution to crime prevention and community safety agendas (Birdwell, 2013) which is described as the ‘deeply public’ nature of religion to provide aid for others (Jawad, 2007:20). For those involved in crime prevention activities and other services for communities, participants felt the police recognised, respected and valued their contribution. Feeling a sense of shared values and vocation to prevent crime, this appeared to provide a connection between faith communities and policing based on ethos and principles. Police recognition of these activities was felt to be important in defining the relationship between active faith groups and policing as a ‘partnership’, characterised by equality and respect, without societal or governance structures defining a hierarchical relationship. The quotes below present the collective views about the core principles of faith and the benefits of partnering between the police and faith groups:

*Because they know that normally all faiths subscribe to the golden rule of ‘do as you would be done by’ and ‘treat other people as you would like to be treated’ whatever religion you’re from so it’s really good to involve faith communities in helping [the police].*

*Beth, Christian*

*Forging that partnership together is crucial because you are almost creating these champions out in the community, who can perhaps carry that message outwardly to people, to promote that collective effort.*

*Meera, Hindu*

Examples of ‘faith initiatives’ include the Christian initiative ‘Street Pastors’, which patrols busy nightlife areas and helps vulnerable people or those in need, which has been replicated by other faith groups including Hindu and Baha’i groups and non-faith groups, such as ‘Street Watch’. The Sunday offering of food at the Gurdwaras by those in the Sikh community to help the homeless and promote community cohesion was also described as

an important contribution to public safety. However, as examined earlier in the chapter, perceptions of policing as 'uncomfortable' working with faith and struggling to effectively 'do difference' (Perry, 2001) described in the previous chapter, creates significant challenges for co-production between policing and faith communities. The findings in this study suggest that the concept of shared values is only recognised one way, whereby faith communities are pushing at the door of policing to contribute and participate, but access is limited due to cultural barriers and fears of equality and diversity policy and discrimination (McFayden and Prideaux, 2014; Reiner, 2010). The way in which policing recognises, values and validates identities in communities plays a significant role in the participation and empowerment of specific social groups (Loader and Mulcahy, 2003; Fraser, 2000). The shared values between policing and faith communities therefore appear to provide underpinnings for a collaborative relationship, but cultural barriers in policing have prevented a significant mobilisation of faith community participation and engagement in policing, discussed in detail in the next section.

### *Cultural barriers*

This sense of 'partnership' between the police and active faith communities contributing to the safety and wellbeing of communities, appeared to become problematic when the commitment from police officers and paid staff came into question, for example through the movement of individuals into new roles or new geographies. This seemed to serve as a reminder to those most active in the community that the provision of services and support from the police in paid roles was due to the salary rather than the vocation. The long-term commitment of faith communities was therefore presented in ways which sometimes challenged the 'equitable partnership' between policing and faith communities. In practice, many participants felt frustrated by the movement of police officers and PCSOs, having spent time and energy sharing knowledge and insight about their local community, culture and faith. These complaints seemed to recreate the concept of hierarchy and imbalance in the relationship, placing faith community contribution as 'constant' and policing as

‘dependent’ on other factors, such as financing, resourcing and geography. The quote below reflects many comments regarding the consistency and long term commitment of people with faith to keeping their communities safe:

*The next quarterly meeting about this community will you be here? Oh no of course. So you are only here because you are being paid! Well you’ve got to recognise that all the other people are here because it’s in their heart to be here to try and do something good so that doesn’t make them second it actually makes you second. You should be here to serve.*

*Adrian, Christian*

Sociological studies suggest that religion, and other forms of solidarity such as ethnicity, provide frameworks for mutual support and communication (Brubaker, 2003) and these religious and social frameworks encourage cooperation and a sense of connectedness, which in communal settings reflects a sense of social capital (McAndrew 2010). Participants shared views and experiences which resonate with the concept of social capital, describing ‘investment’ in the local community, ‘providing support’ to vulnerable people and those at risk of victimisation. This social capital was often viewed as of equal value to policing services and arguably more sustainable, due to the faith directive, duty and willingness to serve amongst people of faith:

*People of faith are maybe more willing to see the bigger picture and getting involved in community activities, and preventing crime must come from a faith directive.*

*Rachel, Baha’i*

*Sikhs have a duty just like a police officer in our way of life to help protect others and at the last resort we will protect others and give our own selves for it. That’s irrespective of whether it is a Sikh child or somebody else that needs*

*that help. That's part of our way of life and I believe it's part of the police way of life. The police get paid for it, we live for it.*

*Ravi, Sikh*

Descriptions of the contributions from faith communities and groups to crime prevention and community safety were often provided in parallel with logical reasoning that police resources are limited. The challenging financial position of the police and the reduction in police officer numbers were considered to be important factors in assessing the relationship between policing and faith communities. Participants tended to describe their commitment and service provision with a sense of ownership over the problems and issues of communities, as well as the duty to serving communities:

*We should be involved in identifying problems and coming up with solutions to help ourselves. If there are challenges, and there are, particularly financially, then we should be part of the discussion. We haven't been.*

*Irene, Quaker*

*We are first on the scene, and there long after [public services] leave*

*Adrian, Christian*

Patrolling through village streets, local parks, small markets or keeping watch at religious buildings during small-scale ceremonies or events, were often viewed as activities that the community should, and does, undertake for itself. However, participants also referenced 'police culture' and police preference to work on the 'hard and fast criminals' and 'catching the bad guys', which reduced their willingness to spend time engaging with communities. These views of policing have been captured in several studies in previous years, particularly the view that community policing is 'soft and fluffy' and operational ranks want to commit to 'catching criminals' and 'real policing' (McLaughlin, 2007:96-97, 182-7). Participants recognised that the majority of police officers they interacted with had limited interest in community problem-solving or engagement work, reflecting the vast limitation in softer

skills of communication, emotional intelligence and relationship-building in policing in the UK (Corsianos, 2011).

The contextual challenges facing policing, in particular austerity and complex crime problems which require community involvement, were seen to be drivers for renewed police interest in building community relationships. This caused frustration, mistrust and a sense of disrespect for the role of faith communities in society for some participants:

*I can't remember who gave [the speech] but it was very much around 'we want you to be involved with the police' and on our table there was some mumbling, 'well you're only saying that because you haven't got any money left, you need us. You weren't that bothered about consulting with us ten years ago but you need us now'.*

*Keith, Athiest*

*We can't keep funding [crime prevention] out of our own pocket you know, we need to draw a line and talk to the police, report everything and just let people know that we're not going to just say 'ah well, we'll do the Christian thing'.*

*Adrian, Christian*

The key concern amongst participants about changing police attitudes towards community engagement and community policing was the impact on infrastructure and support for faith groups and voluntary groups to act as 'genuine partners in the fight against crime'. In some circumstances, the police were perceived to be 'taking and leaving faith community action' on their terms. The actual or perceived division of roles, responsibilities and information was experienced as a problematic aspect of the relationship between policing and faith communities and appeared to remain unresolved for many participants. These experiences demonstrate the challenges in practice of achieving the 'proper democratic relationship between the police, local authority and community' (Tilley, 2004:165). This political and ideological approach to community policing arguably ignores the practical struggle for co-

operative relationships between policing and voluntary action, illustrated in the following quotation:

*I got a snotty reply - 'this is a Police matter, we don't talk to people about investigations that we're doing so, we've got it under control' basically. So that was quite disappointing from our point of view because we weren't asking about the investigative side of things, they'd talked to us about getting her some support.*

*Steve, Christian*

The opportunities for police-faith relations to develop through greater collaboration are evident, but present challenges to current policing models and approaches. In particular, police occupation of a position of authority over communities is inevitably problematic in implementing genuinely democratic policing (Tilley, 2004). Community involvement and participation in policing in ways which do not marginalise or disenfranchise diverse and minority groups presents a way forward and reflects the key principles of procedurally just policing (Tyler, 2008). However, findings explored in this study suggest significant cultural barriers to progressing collaboration between policing and faith communities.

## **Conclusion**

This exploration of the perceptions and experiences of policing across faith groups raises significant cultural and contextual issues which impact on police-faith relations at both the individual level and more broadly for policing as an institution. Perceptions of policing as 'uncultured' were fuelled by the broadly white, male, Christian or no faith make up of policing in the UK. In addition to this, a significant lack of knowledge and understanding of diverse faiths and cultures across the vast majority of policing roles generates a sense that the specific needs and experiences of faith communities are peripheral to policing. The recruitment of police officers from various faith groups and other 'diverse' backgrounds

was emphasised as important both in terms of better representation of communities and to accelerate cultural learning and awareness in policing.

The framing of police-faith relations in terms of risk exacerbates the impact of ‘uncultured’ policing, contributing to a sense of ‘us and them’ which emphasises difference and the distance between policing and diverse faith groups. Specialist community engagement officers play an important role as ‘bridge-builders’ in this context, exhibiting the key skills and approaches underlying the procedural justice model of policing. These roles were associated with fairness, equality, respect, empathy, legitimacy and facilitated the participation and voice of marginalised and disenfranchised faith groups in policing. The findings reject some of the negative criticisms of ‘community leaders’, emphasising the difference between self-identified and community-identified individuals whose intersectionality of identity in the community can facilitate and build positive police-faith relations.

Recognising the role of vulnerability and victimisation in perceptions and experiences of policing, the findings demonstrate that policing approaches and resourcing for tackling specific issues, such as faith hate crime, have a significant impact on faith community perspectives of policing. Reflecting the ‘cultural work’ of the police, the handling of faith hate crime has the potential to increase or decrease recognition of this type of victimisation and those affected by it, both within policing and more broadly. Contextual factors were identified as playing a role in policing models and approaches, particularly austerity and the dominance of policing cultures which appears largely disinterested in faith. Opportunities for collaboration between policing and faith communities were underlined by shared values, but were problematic in practice. The ‘political correctness’ in policing which serves to distance faith from community policing and initiatives presents challenges for faith communities in their ability to fully participate and contribute to policing. These issues are explored further in the following chapter, which pulls together the key findings from data

collected across policing and faith communities and presents three main challenges for policing leaders and policymakers to consider.



## **Chapter Eight**

### **Discussion: Implications for Theory and Practice**

#### **Introduction**

Extending research beyond policing Muslim and Jewish communities, this thesis has sought to understand perceptions and experiences of policing across faith groups, including both the majority Christian community and the more 'seldom heard' groups such as Baha'i, Sikh and Hindu groups. By assessing relationships between faith communities and policing in an 'everyday place', this study was able to explore policing approaches in a small police force which does not routinely deal with extreme and highly-mediated issues of community cohesion or faith-related victimisation. By looking at a different type of geography and demography to cities such as London, Leeds or Birmingham for example, the findings from this research provide insight relevant to the majority of police forces in England and Wales. The perceptions of police officers from senior ranks through to frontline roles were explored in relation to strategies, plans, approaches and skills in understanding and engaging with faith communities. The views and experiences of faith communities were also examined in-depth, exploring interactions with policing, perceptions and experiences of faith-related victimisation and confidence in the local police to understand and meet their needs. This chapter brings together insights from both groups of participants, drawing on, and contributing to, theories and concepts of police culture, identity, intersectionality, procedural justice and legitimacy in the examination of police-faith relations.

This chapter pulls together the findings across the perspectives and experiences of those in policing and those in faith communities and contributes knowledge to three key themes in policing: perceptions of the police as 'uncultured'; the 'cultural work' of the police; and leadership and strategy in the development of relationships between policing and faith communities. Each of the three themes discusses the key findings that have emerged through this research, developing new insight, thinking and challenges for the study of policing. Chapter Nine follows to provide a conclusion to the thesis and

outlines next steps for influencing policy and operationalising these findings, presenting a way forward for police-faith relations.

### **Perceptions of the Police as ‘Uncultured’**

This study brings together issues identified in the cultures of policing which significantly impact on relationships between policing and faith communities. The limited knowledge and understanding of faith in policing is argued to be both a result of and a causal factor in the dominant culture of policing, which values ‘hard’ policing over the ‘softer’ skills of empathising with diverse communities. Improving training is unlikely to provide a solution to this issue, particularly in a context of austerity where there is limited support for faith community engagement from senior police leadership. This thesis supports theory related to procedural justice and legitimacy in police-community relationships and demonstrates that some of the learning gained through counter-terrorism approaches to community engagement could be used to benefit all faith communities going forward.

Chapter Two brought together theories of identity, groups and communities in relation to faith with issues of equality, legitimacy and procedural justice in policing. The history of British culture, the state, welfare, health and education systems have been interlocked with Christianity, which impacts on policing relationships with faith, internally and externally. In the findings from interviews with police officers discussed in Chapter Six, the Christian background of the police force was perceived as a hindrance to progression to a more diverse workforce and to creating a culture of understanding diversity in communities. Primarily this was found to be caused by residual feelings of bias relating to connections between the ‘old boys network’ and promotion, where Christian leaders placed significantly more recognition of participation in Christian events. The relationships between the Chaplaincy and senior leaders in policing has also generated a sense of bias towards the Christian faith, which was perceived to open doors to sites of decision-making that were otherwise closed. The limitations identified in police knowledge of faith groups, understanding of cultural differences and sensitivity to individual needs, were found to be influenced by the wider culture of the police

service. For example, the interchangeability of faith and ethnicity in police discourse is argued to reflect the slow progress in policing to embed policy and practice which recognises the intersectionality of faith and other aspects of identity in experience of victimisation and policing.

Faith continues to be talked about primarily in relation to counter-terrorism and issues of 'diversity', rather than across the operational map of policing, rendering faith only relevant to specific roles or policing issues (McFayden and Prideaux, 2014). This is reflected in the findings of this study, where two specialist community engagement roles are relied upon by the wider force for information about, and engagement with, 'diverse' or 'different' groups. This approach to diversity creates a context of risk for officers and staff, which can intensify the experience of 'Otherness', difference and unfamiliarity with identities and communities less similar to one's own (Loftus, 2008). McFayden and Prideaux (2014) argue that the main driver of the diversity agenda is 'avoidance of the risk of unwitting discrimination or causing offence' (McFayden and Prideaux, 2014:609). Findings from interviews across police officers and faith communities identified 'political correctness' and fear of 'backlash' as factors in levels of service provided to Muslim communities compared to Christian communities, for example. In particular, the perception that 'white Christians won't kick up a fuss' was reflected across various faith groups and across police officer ranks, caused by the perceived risk of complaint from faiths more closely linked to black or minority ethnic backgrounds. In a context where interactions with the police are more likely to damage perceptions of the police than improve them (Myhill and Bradford, 2012), the impact of police officer sensitivity to cultural differences, fairness and equality of service provision are important in the development and maintenance of police relationships with faith communities.

The need to improve police officer understanding of cultural diversity and sensitivity to individual differences is evident in this study and is reflected in wider research (Dunn et al., 2016). However, there are challenges in creating effective training in the area of diversity, where experiences are often negative, reflecting classroom-based training and issues of diversity being considered 'soft and fluffy' (Rowe and Garland, 2013). The

impact of formal training in policing has been questioned in relation to its ability to change attitudes, behaviours and to improve practice (Heslop, 2009). This has been explained through the deterioration of the effect of training against the immersive nature of the social, cultural and emotional aspects of policing that are learnt 'on the job' (Heslop, 2009; Chen et al., 2003). Criticism of the over-reliance on online training tools and one-day awareness training in relation to understanding diversity in communities was overt in this research. However, in a study which moved classroom-based training to placements in the community, the findings showed limited effect on officers' learning because the experiences did not take place within the authentic situated workplace (Heslop, 2011). The findings from this study suggest that the pervasive culture of devaluing softer skills in policing is exacerbated by dominant identities in policing, reflecting middle-aged to older, white men. Older police officers were perceived to be able to use their life experience to deal with diverse situations, but often demonstrated limited cultural awareness. Officers also raised concerns that new recruits, often young in age as well as young in public service, tend to have greater awareness of diversity in communities but quickly learn cultural practices in policing which may lessen sensitivity to diversity and individual needs. The training provided around faith and culture was deemed to be ineffective in challenging these cultural norms and meeting the different needs across demography and attitudes.

This intersectionality of identity in policing and its impact on understanding of diverse cultural and faith communities became apparent in exploration of police officer attitudes towards the 'softer' side of police activities. The dominant culture focussed on crime-fighting and emergency response has created an 'in-group' identity which values militaristic, 'storm trooper' characteristics and devalues the skills and understanding required to effectively engage with diverse communities. These findings are reflected in wider policing research, particularly gender identity studies which contribute to understanding the intersectionality of 'masculine' and 'feminine' characteristics and roles. Corsianos (2011) argues that community policing in particular calls for more 'feminine' characteristics and abilities, including effective communication, good listening skills, demonstrating empathy to victims, de-escalation of violent incidents and working collaboratively with citizens. In order to achieve this, officers with 'diverse skills'

should be recruited, including those with insight across issues of race and ethnicity, sex and gender, class inequalities, languages, social issues and so on, to create officers with the ability to be critical thinkers and 'community-friendly' (Corsianos, 2011:11-12). This links to wider arguments for police officers under the community policing model to have good interpersonal skills and a collaborative style in the identification, analysis and development of solutions to problems (Jurik and Martin, 2001). However, it is argued that the 'masculinised' nature of police work continues to undermine cultural reform due to the enduring culture which values 'hard' policing and catching offenders (Cosgrove and Ramshaw, 2015; Loftus, 2010). Cosgrove (2016) suggests that officers protect and endorse aspects of the traditional policing culture because of its role in constructing and maintaining their identities as police officers. These issues of culture are therefore deep-rooted in policing and have significant consequences for community experience of policing.

The impact of the performance-driven, enforcement-focussed and 'hard' policing culture on police engagement with faith communities can be seen particularly in the role of the PCSO. The findings discussed in Chapter Six demonstrate the dichotomy faced by PCSOs, where the core role is about building understanding of communities, developing relationships and preventing crime, in a context where limited value is placed on these activities. The prioritisation of crime-control activities over community engagement for PCSOs has been documented in recent studies (Cosgrove and Ramshaw, 2015; Millie, 2013) and the potential detrimental impact of this narrowing role on community policing has been recognised by Her Majesty's Inspectorate of Constabularies and the Independent Police Complaints Commission (HMIC, 2013; IPCC, 2013). Wider research supports the findings in this study which suggest that this shift in PCSO role has been caused largely by austerity (Cosgrove, 2015). The impact of the reduction in PCSOs was felt to be significant in policing, although this was only partly related to the loss of connections with communities and arguably more so to do with PCSOs being available to 'free up' police officers to get to the next incident. Faith communities reflected on PCSOs very positively, demonstrating the links between PCSO activities such as attendance at faith events, places of worship and community meetings with key factors in perceptions of procedural justice and legitimacy in policing. Providing

voice to faith communities, facilitating two-way dialogue between policing and communities and demonstrating equality and fairness across identities and groups, PCSOs played an important role in valuing the participation of faith communities in policing. However, the acceptance, integration, credibility and value of PCSOs within their neighbourhood policing teams has been shown to be dependent on their ability to contribute to enforcement and crime control activities (Cosgrove and Ramshaw, 2015; O'Neill, 2015). Aspirations amongst PCSOs to become police officers is also recognised as a 'pull' into the traditional culture of policing, focussed on fighting crime and achieving authority and legitimacy amongst peers (Loftus, 2010). The PCSO participants in this study presented pride and enjoyment in their community engagement work and described several examples of effective, trusting relationships with faith groups and communities in their areas. They found that challenges arose in balancing the maintenance of trust and confidence during times when they were tasked with gathering intelligence or information which threatened those relationships. These findings suggest a reinvigoration of the PCSO role is needed, as a dedicated resource for fostering police-community relations and driving legitimacy in policing.

The findings of this study build on previous work providing insight into the challenges in drawing demarcation lines between police community engagement, initiatives to support community cohesion and intelligence-gathering activities to support counter-terrorism (Choudhury, 2010; Greer, 2010; Kundnani, 2009; Spalek and Lambert, 2008; Spalek 2008; Lambert 2008). The clarity of national and local strategy, policy and alignment of resource to counter-terrorism provided some positivity about the agenda, in comparison to the poorly resourced and unclear strategy for community engagement more broadly. Findings from both police officers and faith communities revealed some support for the increased engagement with Muslim communities, despite the fact that it was fuelled by issues of radicalisation and extremism and that the first few years were perceived to have been poorly designed and executed. Both groups recognised that increased engagement between the police and faith communities could lead to shared strategies, actions and resources to tackle issues in collaboration. Community engagement under the counter-terrorism strategy has therefore explicitly recognised the importance of faith communities and religious identities in tackling crime problems

and the benefits of co-production with the police (Dunn et al., 2016; Vermeulen, 2014; Bettison, 2009). These perceived benefits strictly contrast the widely held perspective that this increased focus in policing has effectively labelled the Muslim community a 'suspect' community, requiring additional policing intervention focussed on reducing their terrorist threat to the rest of society (Millings, 2013; McGhee, 2010; Poynting and Perry, 2007). It is argued that community policing, including specific engagement with local infrastructure and faith groups, existed long before counter-terrorism tactics and therefore should not be critiqued under this narrow focus (McFayden and Prideaux, 2016). The benefits and possibilities of engaging faith groups outweigh the disadvantages or risks of failing to do so. The findings of this study support this position; moving the focus beyond one specific group will shift the narrative regarding counter-terrorism as the dominant agenda through which police engagement with faith communities is undertaken and will contribute to perceptions of the police as valuing cultural diversity.

This study found that whilst memories of the damaging effects of the early Prevent activities lingered, current police practice with regard to counter-terrorism was generally not perceived negatively. Research demonstrates that relationships with communities can be rebuilt through improving perceptions of procedural justice in the way counter-terrorism policing is undertaken (Tyler et al., 2011). Procedural justice collates a number of measures of perception and experience, including the extent to which procedures are perceived to be fair, individuals are treated with respect, dignity and politeness, decision-making is understood and the individual's voice is heard during processes (Roberts and Herrington, 2013). This means that the development and maintenance of perceptions of procedural justice is problematic, as several aspects of the attitudes, behaviours and communication of individual police officers and the wider police service interrelate to achieve a positive perception overall. Therefore, perceptions of procedural justice built up by neighbourhood or counter-terrorism liaison officers can be undermined by the actions of other police officers, for example response officers, and the wider political and legal system (Cherney and Murphy, 2013). This creates additional challenges and frustrations for those in roles where building community relationships is their priority and reiterates the need to address procedural

justice, legitimacy and cultural sensitivity across all roles in policing. The perception of the police service as largely 'uncultured' is limiting to procedural justice and legitimacy agendas, particularly for faith groups where relationships are fragile.

Procedural justice has been considered in relation to social identities, social interactions and the ways in which groups and communities can shape perceptions of social identity (Bradford et al., 2014; Tyler and Blader, 2003). Research in Victoria, Australia, explored the problem of over- or under-policing minority groups and found that perceptions of the police unfairly targeting ethnic groups as suspects and trivialising their victimisation were held by both minority and non-minority groups (Mason et al. 2014; Joudo Larsen, 2010). Findings discussed in Chapter Seven reflect on the perceptions and experiences across faith groups and suggest that the over-policing of the Muslim community in recent years has impacted on all faith groups perceptions of legitimacy in policing. The perception that specific communities will be 'targeted' based on the actions of a minority, created a sense that 'it could be us next'. This generated solidarity amongst faith groups and a willingness to cooperate with the police to prevent similar targeting and divisive approaches in future. The solidarity of religious and social frameworks encourages cooperation, connectedness and social capital (McAndrew, 2010) and can mobilise community action (Perry, 2015). There is a strong relationship between perceptions of procedural justice, legitimacy and willingness to cooperate with the police (Hough et al., 2013; Roberts and Herrington, 2013). This solidarity between faith groups could facilitate routes of communication and development of relationships between policing and marginalised or disenfranchised groups.

This assessment of the police as 'uncultured' presents a need in policing to move beyond the risk-based approach to understanding diversity and culture in communities to one which values trusting, collaborative relationships with individuals and communities. This requires a significant shift in policing cultures which rewards militaristic approaches to fighting crime and ignores valuable skills in developing relationships through communication, understanding and empathy. For policing to begin projecting as a 'cultured' service, the consistent engagement across faith communities which focusses on achieving procedural justice, legitimacy, trust and confidence needs to be embedded



in police practice, which is discussed in further detail in Chapter Nine. Whilst systemic cultural barriers have prevented this type of progress in police-community relations to date, the context of increasing diversity in communities and increased pressure on police resources provides a new drive to develop policing approaches differently.

### **The 'Cultural Work' of the Police**

This thesis argues for greater recognition of the 'cultural work' of the police, introduced in Chapter Four, and for the need to redefine it away from the disempowerment of different faith groups and towards the inclusion and empowerment of all faith groups. Through policing policy and practice, including for example targeting specific identities and the distribution of resources, some social identities can be rendered valid and legitimate whilst others are prevented from fully participating in policing and wider citizenship. Policing approaches to tackling prejudice and faith hate crime are also indicators of this 'cultural work', impacting on perceptions across faith groups, not simply those most likely to be impacted upon by faith hate crime. Police investment and visibility in tackling prejudice and hate crime are interpreted both internally in policing and externally in communities as a reflection of the importance of understanding and preventing the targeting of specific identities and groups. This is particularly impactful for groups already at the periphery of recognition by policing and the state more broadly. This study argues that the impact of increasing secularism in wider society and risk-based approaches to policing diversity has created an environment in which faith communities are less able to engage with policing.

As discussed in Chapter Two, the experience of 'in-group' and 'out-group' identification in communities and society more broadly, impact on perceptions of the police, access to police services and experience of police intervention (Husband and Alam, 2011; Jenkins, 2008; Castells, 2004; Roy, 2004). Policing, and public discourse surrounding policing, can play a significant role in the political, social, cultural and psychological processes which impact on the intersectionality of 'in-group', 'out-group' and 'Other' status (Brubaker, 2003). For example, visible police action to tackle hate crime contributes to creating a social climate that rejects public displays of identity prejudice

(Walters and Hoyle, 2010). Police action to 'over-police' and homogenise a faith community as 'suspicious' and 'under-police' victimisation of that community arguably contributes to the legitimisation of public displays of identity prejudice (Mason et al., 2015; Perry 2010).

The findings in this study suggest that disinvestment in specialist hate crime officers, minimal policing of community hostility and hate crime and the hangover effects of Prevent, have impacted on faith community perceptions of policing. Solidarity between faith communities has created a collective sense of vulnerability beyond the Muslim community, which is exacerbated by increasing secularism in wider society. These factors have generated perceptions that policing tends not to recognise faith as an important aspect of individual or community identity, beyond the threat of extremism. The concept that interactions with, and perceptions of, policing reflects or reaffirms relationships with the state more broadly has been described as the 'cultural work' or 'cultural sociology of policing' (Millings, 2013:1076). The way in which policing recognises, values and validates social actors plays a significant role in defining culture, social order and the empowerment of specific social groups (Loader and Mulcahy, 2003; Fraser, 2000). This became apparent in the findings discussed in Chapter Seven, where faith communities identified increasing secularism in state and public services as a limiting factor in their relationship with policing.

The findings revealed that in order to maintain positive relationships with the police during interactions, faith communities felt obliged to keep their faith 'low key' or hidden. As an important part of identity, this appeared to be both a causal factor and a result of the 'uncultured' state of policing, where the 'host community's greater relative secularism...creates a generalised blind to the significance of religion' (McFayden and Prideaux, 2014:609). This unwillingness amongst the police to talk about faith or accept public references to faith was described by police officers, in Chapter Six, as risk-averse behaviour designed to ensure neutrality and objectivity in police service provision. This approach in policing relates specifically to community-based crime prevention activities and engagement with faith-based charities and organisations. However, this approach to interaction and engagement with faith communities significantly impacts on

perceptions of police understanding of, and respect for, faith in communities. As discussed in Chapter Three, the increasing secularism evident within wider society and the challenges facing policy makers in relation to community cohesion and integration have implications for policing approaches at the community level. Ongoing international conflict and terrorism continue to impact on public discourse about immigration, radicalisation and conflict between communities. Policing needs to be immersed in communities, developing relationships across identities and groups and moving beyond isolated, targeted approaches which affirm positions of disempowerment. This 'cultural work' of the police, enforcing secularist engagement in community-based crime prevention, arguably goes beyond the scope of policing and is an issue for government policy and discourse. Whilst the police continue to recognise, affirm and validate some social groups and not others, the ability of faith communities to fully participate in their citizenship will be hindered.

The role of multiple 'out-group' status on the willingness of victims to report hate crime supports the contention that the police need to do more to reduce barriers to engagement (Walters et al., 2016b; Dunbar, 2006). As presented in Chapter Four, there are significant challenges to policing in response to faith hate crime: increasing reporting across faith communities; ensuring frontline police officers have the skills necessary to protect and reassure victims and wider communities; and the need to understand the relationship between global events and local community relationships and conflict. The findings explored in Chapter Seven regarding reluctance to report hate crime victimisation to the police reflect wider research in this field, in particular: the severity of the incident, repeat victimisation and perceptions of the ability of the police to respond and to investigate (Walters et al., 2016a; Awan and Zempi, 2015; Chakraborti and Hardy, 2015; Giannasi, 2015; James, 2014; Home Office, Office for National Statistics and Ministry of Justice 2013). Experiences of faith hate crime and hostility shared in this study included both 'low level', 'everyday hate' and serious violence and were experienced across faith groups. The findings from this study also highlighted the indirect impact of faith hate crime on wider identities and groups, where the targeted attack of identities with a shared perceived status of 'Other', caused feelings of vulnerability and exclusion. Perceptions of the perpetrators of faith hate crime tended

to reflect the academic perspective that everyday hate can be a rational assertion by offenders of their own identity and belongingness (Perry, 2010). This perception, alongside views that very little evidence is available to catch perpetrators, led to acceptance of experiences of prejudice and hate crime as inherent to identity in specific contexts.

The development of specialist hate crime units in most forces increased perceptions amongst frontline officers that hate crime is dealt with by specialists and therefore created an 'it's not my problem' attitude amongst frontline officers (Hall, 2013; Hall, 2005). As reflected in this study, with a specialist team hate crime became 'the squad's responsibility, not the collective responsibility'. Following the financial cuts to policing budgets in recent years, many dedicated specialist teams have been removed and replaced by additional training for all officers responding to incidents. Whilst this is argued to shift both the responsibility and the skills from the few to the many, the findings from this study suggest that both police officers and faith communities who are engaged with the police perceive this to be a disinvestment in tackling hate crime. Despite specific training regarding diversity in communities, understanding vulnerability and responding to hate crime, the findings demonstrate that police officers believe these jobs require personal interest and empathy. Officers known for handling hate crime and community engagement are considered to be 'round pegs in round holes'. As reflected in the findings in Chapter Six, limited understanding and interest in faith hate crime by the majority of response officers generates a lesser service for those affected. Continued interchangeable use of faith and ethnicity in descriptors of communities and victims also suggests failings in the generalist police approach to faith-community engagement and tackling faith hate crime. Removing specialist roles and struggling to generate a culture of interest in and empathy for faith communities in policing, has implications for the 'cultural work' of the police in facilitating equity of protection and service delivery across faith communities.

This study contributes to academic thinking around the concept of the 'sociology of policing' (Millings, 2013) and the 'cultural work' of the police. Redefining this cultural work requires recognition of the impact of policing policy and practice on social

identities, social order, the perceptions and experiences of different identities and groups and the ability of individuals and communities to fully participate in society and citizenship. The findings suggest that the police service is ignorant to this level of impact on faith communities and recognition of this impact is the first step to correcting it. Police engagement with faith communities, both in relation to community-based crime prevention and specifically tackling faith hate crime, needs to move beyond the risk-based approach of avoiding faith-related dialogue. Instead, an inclusive model of communication and engagement needs to be adopted, discussed in detail in the following Chapter, which enables faith communities to fully participate in policing.

### **Leadership and Strategy in Faith Community Engagement**

The findings from this study underline the role of leadership, strategy, planning and resources in improving relationships between policing and faith communities. The issues described in the findings chapters and the previous two sections are unsurprising in a policing context where the maintenance of positive relationships with faith communities is a low priority. However, police focus on perceptions of legitimacy remains prominent in government discourse regarding policing and this study seeks to make faith communities explicit in this discourse. The risk-averse approach to police collaboration with faith communities in crime prevention activities not only exacerbates their sense of exclusion from policing but also excludes the potential benefits of co-production in reducing crime.

The lack of leadership, strategy, action plans, targets or performance review in the engagement, relationships, trust and confidence of faith communities are identified by police officers in Chapter Six of this study. This has led to the 'uncultured' police image described in the first section of this chapter, characterised by limited knowledge and understanding of faith communities. This is further exacerbated by the wider secularisation of the state and in turn policing approaches to community engagement and community-based crime prevention. The clarity of government policy, police strategy and frontline police delivery in relation to tackling Islamic radicalisation, extremism and terrorism was described as key to police delivery of this agenda. This

clarity, visible police leadership and alignment of resources were not identified in police engagement with faith communities. Whilst austerity is recognised as playing a fundamental role in the decline of community policing (Corder, 2014), government discourse and police leadership set the agenda for alignment of resources to policing models and approaches. As explored in Chapter Three, the amendments to the latest counter-terrorism strategy, CONTEST III, drew a distinction between Prevent work and initiatives to support integration and community cohesion, which were realigned to the Department for Communities and Local Government (HM Government, 2011). Whilst this development led to improvements in the policing approach to Prevent work and building relationships with Muslim communities, the intentions of this shift to integrate wider faith communities in engagement with public services has not been realised. Findings in this study suggest improvement in perceptions of policing approaches to counter-terrorism, both by faith communities and the police themselves. However, both groups also recognise the benefits of wider engagement across faiths to prevent the political, social, and cultural ramifications of targeting specific groups. In order for this change to be credible and achieve improved practice in frontline policing, ownership is required by senior police leaders.

Policing approaches to faith community engagement and faith hate crime have evolved through different models of dedicated specialist police officers and teams, to generalist 'omni-competent' police officer response and investigation. The challenges for policing in effectively identifying, investigating, resolving and preventing faith hate crime are discussed in Chapter Four. The gap between 'over-inclusive' approaches to identifying hate crime in policing practice and the 'under-inclusive' prosecutorial elements regarding offender liability, create challenges in bringing together hate crime policy and frontline practice (Mason et al., 2015:1-2; Chakraborti, 2015; Hall, 2012). The need for increased understanding of hate crime, at the 'over-inclusive' end of the scale, is particularly significant for marginalised communities, whose experiences of policing tend to be less positive (Murphy and Cherney, 2011) and whose trust and confidence in the police to take them seriously and treat them with fairness and respect is lower (Myhill and Bradford, 2012). The 'ripple effects' of faith hate crime and hostility between communities (Iganski, 2008) were reflected in the findings of this study, impacting

individuals and communities of the same faith and different faiths. Participants emphasised the impact of visible police investigation, intervention and engagement around faith hate crime as critical to faith community perceptions of the police as legitimate and fair. Levels of investment in dedicated police resource to understand, prevent and tackle faith hate crime is perceived to be an indicator of police recognition of people with faith. Police actions and resource allocation are inextricably linked with political and public discourse (Koopmans, 2005) and therefore have the power to produce or reduce 'enablers' of faith hate victimisation (Perry, 2010). Whilst recorded faith hate crime is very low in the case study area, faith communities experience 'Othering' and 'everyday' hate crime without drawing it to the attention of the police. The findings of this research suggest that policing leaders may be unaware of the extent of faith hate crime, community hostility and prejudice in their 'everyday' county. This work also suggests that without visible leadership recognition of these issues, the alignment of dedicated resource and a clear strategy to embed policing approaches to tackle prejudice and hate crime will not be implemented.

The current approach to police engagement with faith communities arguably does not capitalise on this potential power to 'produce or reduce' enablers of faith hate victimisation and prejudice. Engagement tends to focus on building relationships through existing infrastructure, including places of worship, community meetings and 'key individual networks', as discussed in Chapter Seven. Perceptions of the need for the police to innovate in engagement techniques were held by both police officers and faith communities, recognising the need to develop sustainable approaches which reach deeply into diverse communities. Police community engagement rarely reaches marginalised, disengaged or 'seldom heard' individuals and groups, for example younger groups, those experiencing language barriers, new migrant communities and those less able to use their voice in public settings (Chakraborti, 2015; Spalek, 2014). There is fair criticism of public service engagement overly relying on the most visible, easily accessible identities in communities who might be identified as a spokesperson or community leader (Spalek, 2008). These approaches leave voices unheard, 'communities within communities' unrepresented and specific needs unmet (Perry, 2015; Tahiri and Grossman 2012; Chakraborti, 2009; Spalek, 2008). However, the

findings of this study offer a different view on the identification and engagement of faith community 'leaders'.

Those identified as community leaders in this study tended to reject the title and described themselves as 'committed volunteers', focussed on improving their communities, improving access to public services and providing support to community members. The 'community leader' label was therefore often given by the community members or the police, rather than owned personally by the individual. In this respect, faith community leaders who engage with the police have achieved a channel through which wider community perceptions can begin to be addressed. In many contexts it may be difficult to break community norms and create relationships with policing, particularly where a history of distrust and disengagement exist (Antrobus et al., 2015). The 'community leader' label may provide a reassuring and sensible construct of identity for wider community members to understand, accept and interact with. There remains a significant need to build lines of communication beyond community leaders, but triangulating the views of the police, community leaders and community members provides a positive reframe of this issue. Community leaders, or 'committed volunteers', play a considerable role in facilitating relationships between the police and communities and provide an opportunity to improve police legitimacy and effectiveness.

Whilst community policing and community engagement in crime-prevention activities is evidenced to be effective in reducing crime (Cordner, 2014), challenges around the balance of responsibility for public safety exist. The findings from police officers in this research reflect wider concerns in the police service that 'self-policing' in and by communities cannot be impartial, independent, reliable or consistent (Choi and Lee, 2016). This is due to the variable power of specific interest groups, the strength of gang culture and vigilantism and some groups being less able to self-police than others (Choi and Lee, 2016). However, the limitations created by ensuring these risks are mitigated arguably loses the valuable contribution offered by faith communities, as explored in this research. This risk-averse approach maintains the vast majority of responsibility for public safety in the hands of the police and local authorities, despite the growing evidence-base for the successes of co-production of public safety (Glaser and Denhardt,



2010). Coproduction in this context is about creating positive relationships between public services and citizens, by ensuring citizens play an integral role in identifying community problems, designing services and responses and being involved in the delivery (Trajanowicz et al., 1998; Levine, 1984).

This brings the role of Police and Crime Commissioners (PCCs) into discussion, whereby their role in increasing democracy in policing, widening public involvement in setting the strategy, reviewing performance and providing governance is fundamental to changing public relationships with policing. Whilst there is an important role for a governing body to drive transparency, democracy and understanding in police governance for the public, the achievement of positive and reliable police-faith relations relies upon direct relationships. The findings in this study demonstrate the impact of individual and collective police officer behaviour and approaches to dealing with, and engaging with, faith communities. Engaging with the grant functions, public involvement activities and strategy development work of the Police and Crime Commissioner did not appear to play a significant role in perceptions of the operational and practical application of policing. In particular, the challenges this thesis presents to policing regarding the 'uncultured' image of the institution requires fundamental changes across the interpersonal, behavioural and communication styles of 'response' policing alongside those delivery neighbourhood and community engagement roles. The scope for PCCs to generate greater awareness and engagement with policing strategy and review can play an important role alongside developments within policing to present a police service that invites involvement, diversity and difference which could contribute to creating the conditions in which co-production between policing and faith communities could flourish.

Critiques of co-production in relation to public safety suggest that firstly, the underlying driver is financial savings for frontline services (Alford, 2000) or that building a stronger sense of community identity and participation can serve to isolate or fragment communities (Glaser et al., 2001). This latter point reflects the discussion around multiculturalism and community cohesion in Chapter Three, which suggests that community solidarity creates 'Othering', risking hostility and, in this context, faith hate

crime (Perry, 2015; Perry, 2010). To overcome this, policing needs to promote relationships, congruence and a collective agenda at both the neighbourhood and wider community level (Adams et al., 2005; Scott, 2002; Glaser and Denhardt, 2010). The success therefore of community policing and co-production is in the facilitation of citizens moving beyond being solely self-interested towards accepting some responsibility for the well-being of their fellow citizens (Wheatley and Kellner-Rogers, 1998). The 'faith directive' and sense of duty shared by faith communities, described in Chapter Seven, suggests an open door to progressing models of greater collaboration and co-production between policing and faith communities. There is an argument in policing that facilitating community cohesion is largely the role and responsibility of other agencies and whilst the police continue to tackle tensions within communities, their roles overlap considerably with those in social work and community development (Cockcroft, 2013). However, as discussed in Chapter Three policing in the UK continues to pride itself in the Peelian principle that 'the public are the police and the police are the public' (Reiner, 2010), which demands a direct relationship between the police and communities. Delivery of community engagement and collaboration activities primarily through other agencies would remove their potential to build perceptions of procedural justice in policing, to build confidence, to improve engagement in justice processes and to support law-abiding behaviour (Roberts and Herrington, 2013; Tyler et al., 2011). Visible police leadership, clarity of strategy and agenda and maximising collaborative approaches to public safety have been shown to contribute to effective police delivery and improving perceptions of procedural justice and legitimacy. The duty is on policing leaders to shift from a position of risk management and ownership of public safety, to a shared model of community policing which maximises the contribution of faith communities without compromising the equality or objectivity of public safety.

## **Conclusion**

Bringing together the findings from police perspectives and the perceptions and experiences of faith communities highlighted the internal and external perception of policing as 'uncultured', caused by issues of police culture, resources and organisational focus. The lack of diversity in policing and deep-rooted Christian background were found

to contribute to the dominance of the 'old boys network' which exacerbates the lack of awareness and interest in the needs of diverse faith groups. 'Faith' appears to be primarily associated with counter-terrorism, rendering knowledge of faith in communities applicable to specialist roles. This intensifies perceptions and experience of 'difference' both internally in policing and in communities. The findings suggest this context has created a risk-based approach to police engagement with faith communities which avoids risk of offence or prejudice by disengaging with all issues related to 'diversity'. The study also contributes empirical evidence to support the procedural justice theory in police-community relationships, generating data which identifies relationships between fairness and transparency with confidence, trust, legitimacy and willingness to support policing. This highlighted specific challenges for building and maintaining positive relationships between policing and faith communities, where there are significantly different experiences across specialist community engagement roles, 'response' officers and those supporting counter-terrorism objectives.

This thesis provides further evidence for the development of theory about the 'cultural work' of the police, demonstrating the role of policing in the recognition and validation of some social identities over others. This research suggests that policing is ignorant to its impact on the experiences of faith communities in relation to social order, perceptions and experiences of 'Othering' and prejudice. In addition to this, disinvestment in specialist roles to tackle hate crime and to engage with diverse communities has strengthened perceptions of policing, and the state more broadly, as withdrawing resources from tackling tensions, divides and prejudice in communities. The lack of visible leadership and strategy to drive faith community engagement was identified within policing and across faith groups and has contributed to perceptions of the state and policing as enablers of an environment in which bias and prejudice goes unchallenged. The current context of 'Brexit' in the UK, rising hate crime and uncertainty in communities highlights the need to address these issues imminently. Opportunities for developing this approach and operationalising these findings are explored in the following and final section of this thesis.

## **Chapter Nine**

### **Conclusions and Next Steps**

#### **Introduction**

The findings discussed in the previous chapters have implications for the case study police force, policing and related policy at the national level and for public safety approaches more broadly. To achieve improvements in police-faith relations, this thesis calls for thinking to move beyond ‘community policing’ to ‘community participation’, expanding opportunities for voice and engagement across identities and groups in communities. This approach requires increased investment from both policing and communities, recognising the potential for improved legitimacy, participation and collaboration. The ability of citizen participation to change police priorities or attitudes, or to improve democracy in policing, is challenged based on research and evidence of current practice (Bullock, 2014). However, to continue to accept police-community relations as they currently stand is to continue to witness the misrecognition and marginalisation of groups often most in need of support and protection. Whilst in practice the suggestion to increase police resources directed towards community participation is likely to be met with challenges relating to austerity, this opportunity would serve to mobilise significant resource and investment from communities if delivered well. This study evidences the willingness across faith groups to participate and contribute to policing communities. A significant shift in police culture is needed to progress this, addressing policing holistically across strategy, structure, processes, people and resources. This final chapter seeks to operationalise the conclusions of this thesis and to present opportunities to move forward in the improvement of police-faith relations.

#### **Conclusions**

This thesis provides insight into the relationship between policing and faith communities in one police force area, where diversity in communities is relatively low and faith hate

crime victimisation is rarely reported to the police. Analysis of interviews and focus groups across policing leadership, management and frontline roles, and individuals from Baha'i, Christian, Hindu, Jewish, Muslim, Sikh and Quaker communities, contributed to this study. By undertaking this exploration in an 'everyday' county with a small police force, issues of police culture, prejudice, faith hate crime and community hostility have been evidenced as issues not only faced by large, multicultural cities. The challenges outlined in Chapter Five regarding the methodology of seeking the views of collective faith communities, without minimising the specificity of experiences within those communities, provide scope for further research in this field. Taking this research beyond Muslim and Jewish perceptions and experiences of policing provides new insight across faith groups and contributes to this gap in academic literature. However, it was outside of the parameters of this study to produce findings representative of individual faith groups. Further research to explore the intersectionality of faith with other aspects of identity in relationships with policing, including social mobility and volunteering for example, would provide greater insight into the 'faith directive' to support policing objectives. Quantitative measurement of the contribution of faith communities to crime prevention and victim support is also an area of research which would be well received by policy makers and police leaders and would likely generate further interest in creating pluralistic approaches to involvement in policing. The parallels between aspects of police culture evident in this case study of a small police force with those identified in large forces in the UK and the US, reiterates the argument that there is one overarching, dominant culture in policing (Loftus, 2009). However, limited research examines theory and practice in effectively changing or breaking police culture.

The 'uncultured' image of the police force identified in this work has been created through the limited value placed on understanding and engaging with diverse communities. Faith communities in particular have been disadvantaged by this cultural vacuum, often being identified and categorised by ethnicity or country of origin, rendering faith less important in individual identity in relation to policing. The dominant discourse of risk in relation to faith as an aspect of diversity has produced a policing culture which focuses on political correctness and classroom-based training. This culture fails to recognise faith as an important aspect of individual identity both internally in

police forces and externally in communities. The intersectionality of identity in police officers is shown to relate to their attitudes, understanding, skills and approach to engaging with faith communities and valuing 'softer' skills. The broader policing culture which rewards militaristic approaches to policing and undermines community engagement exacerbates the disempowerment and exclusion of faith communities from full participation in policing. These findings demonstrate the pervasive and dominant phenomena in police cultures associated with large, metropolitan police forces across the UK and US, which are reflected in this small police force in an 'everyday' place. In order to achieve perceptions of procedural justice and legitimacy across faith communities, these aspects of police culture need to shift significantly and make space for immersive community policing. Academic study of the procedural justice model of policing tends to focus on the specific activities, behaviours and language of police officers, yet this study suggests the need for a more holistic assessment of the factors which enable procedurally just policing, including the examination of dominant police cultures.

The findings of this study support the concept of the 'cultural work' of the police and demonstrate that police recognition and validation of some social identities over others impacts on relationships with, and perceptions of, the state, public discourse and community cohesion. The research identified feelings of exclusion across faith groups based on increasing secularism in community-based crime prevention and the visible disinvestment in policing resources to tackle faith hate crime. The findings also show that these issues are evident in small towns and counties where 'diversity', prejudice and faith hate crime are less visible compared to multicultural cities. This study suggests that policing is unaware of its impact on social order, contributing to an enabling environment for prejudice and faith hate crime, not only through counter-terrorism policing but more broadly through the risk-averse approach to engaging communities. Models of collaboration and co-production of public safety with faith communities need to be explored, considering approaches which enable full participation in citizenship and build perceptions of police legitimacy in society. The potential benefits for the political, cultural, social and psychological empowerment of faith communities could be realised through an inclusive, pluralist approach to police-community relations. Opportunities

for developing this approach and operationalising these findings are explored in the following and final section of this thesis.

### **Next Steps**

At present the vision and strategy for police-faith relations and community policing more broadly is limited in the case study force, which is likely to be reflected in other forces nationally. Policing needs a long-term strategy of community engagement, which emphasises the value of community relationships, drives openness to difference and actively invests in communication across identities and communities. Despite challenges around declining community policing, the infrastructure of policing continues to include neighbourhood or local policing teams. Specialist, dedicated roles to community engagement and participation should form part of the local structures of policing, perhaps sensibly as a reinvigoration of the PCSO role and as an expansion to the community engagement officer role. This calls for resource to be directed towards a more sophisticated, specialist and protected PCSO role which is charged with responsibilities to understand communities, needs, experiences, conflict and the potential for conflict, to contribute to both the prevention of prejudice and crime, but also to facilitate the voice of marginalised groups in society. These roles, with the appropriate powers and responsibilities, could also provide dedicated attention towards the prevention of hate crime, overtly demonstrating a policing stand against bias and prejudice in communities.

With this strategy and structure in place to build police-community relations, the process of communicating and engaging with diverse communities will be directed and resourced to reach beyond those routinely accessed and heard. Using both online and physical platforms, community engagement specialists can generate two-way dialogue in ways which do not replicate the inequality of public meetings connected to political engagement, lobbying and campaigners (Chakraborti, 2015; Bullock, 2014). The dominant discourse of risk in relation to faith as an aspect of diversity has produced a policing culture which focuses on political correctness and classroom-based training. In order to achieve perceptions of procedural justice and legitimacy across faith

communities, these aspects of police culture need to shift significantly and make space for immersive community policing. Academic study of the procedural justice model of policing tends to focus on the specific activities, behaviours and language of police officers, yet this study suggests the need for a more holistic assessment of the factors which enable procedurally just policing, including the examination of dominant police cultures.

In order for this approach to be effective, the people in policing need to reflect the skills and approaches to working with communities which underline the procedural justice model. This study demonstrates that the people who gain the trust and collaboration of faith groups are those who are evidently fair and respectful across groups, empathise with individuals and contexts, explain decision-making and enable communities to have a voice. Shifting the police culture to value the procedural justice model of policing requires visible senior leadership which emphasises that this is not the sole responsibility of the few roles dedicated to engaging communities, but a holistic model for policing. This is a significant challenge, recognising the wealth of evidence which suggests the persistence of a dominant policing culture which has remained largely unchanged over decades of police reform and transformation (Cockcroft, 2014; Loftus, 2009). However, in a context of increasing diversity and reducing resources, the pressures on policing to think differently and share responsibility for public safety with communities may provide the shift required to facilitate this cultural change.

Citizen participation and volunteering in policing is understudied and undervalued at present (Pepper and Wolf, 2015). However, successive governments continue to focus on the increase of the Special Constabulary, particularly recognising its potential to improve diversity in policing and reach into diverse communities (Bullock and Leeney, 2014). This provides fertile ground for the expansion of volunteering in policing more broadly. However, this study evidences the need for policing to collaborate more effectively with faith communities, in ways which facilitate expression of faith, diversity and difference. For increased volunteering in policing to contribute to improving police-faith relations and more broadly to increase democracy and legitimacy in policing, those volunteering need to represent identities not already politically, socially and



economically engaged (Chakraborti, 2015). However, increased resourcing, improved strategy and focus of PCSOs, or similar roles, to the engagement of marginalised groups would move beyond the current model in policing which relies on existing infrastructure and visible sites for community engagement. By mobilising volunteering across identities, groups and communities, and in ways which engage across online and physical platforms, the reach of police engagement and participation could grow exponentially. There is growing interest in this potential, particularly following the creation of the National Police Chief's Council 'Citizens in Policing' business area, which seeks to maximise the contribution of volunteers in policing. The Home Office are also developing policy and legislation to enable Chief Constables to designate powers to volunteers (Home Office, 2015). This context may support investment in further research in this area, particularly understanding the 'faith directive' in volunteering in faith communities and how this may support policing objectives.

Finally, if these recommendations for reinvigorated, resourced and immersive community engagement and participation were adopted, policing could be ripe for 'culturing up' and demonstrating genuine openness to diversity, faith and culture. Open discourse about tackling systemic misrecognition, bias and prejudice both internally in policing and externally in communities related to any aspect of identity or intersectionality of identity, will facilitate police-community relations. A result of this cultural shift should be the improved representation of diverse ethnicities and faiths in policing, reflecting an institution which values legitimacy and difference. Developments in the procedural justice model of policing to consider the phenomena and constructs which fuel negative aspects of police cultures are also required to support progress in policing. Greater insight into the intersectionality of identities and experiences of policing, alongside broader notions of issues of diversity, would also facilitate progression towards models of policing which recognise the importance of belonging and participation.

Over and above the specific recommendations outlined in this chapter, visible senior leadership which embraces 'difference' is paramount to change in policing (Reiner, 2010; Loftus, 2009) and specifically to change in police culture (Cockcroft, 2013).

Policing acceptance and recognition of faith in communities is the core requirement emerging from this thesis and is the core route towards achieving legitimacy in police-faith relations.

## Appendices

### Appendix One

#### Interview Schedule – Police Officers and Staff

(All ranks)

1. How would you describe your knowledge of faith communities in \*case study area\*?
2. How would you describe your knowledge of the policing, crime or local concerns within faith communities in \*case study area\*?
3. What training is available to you in relation to faith, religion, belief and culture?
  - a. If any, have you undertaken this training?
  - b. If so, how has this impacted on your work, relationships or response to people in faith communities?
4. How accessible is information about faith in \*case study area\*?
  - a. What it means in relation to officer response or behaviour?
  - b. What it means in relation to victim needs or expectations?
  - c. What it means in relation to community issues or tension?
5. How do local policing teams communicate information and messages to faith communities?
  - a. Are there specific locations or people?
  - b. Are specific officers or staff responsible or relied upon to do this?
6. How does engagement with faith communities feature in local policing activity?
7. What do you perceive to be the benefits of communication and engagement with faith communities?
8. What, if any, do you perceive to be the risks of communication and engagement with faith communities, to the work of the police?

(Frontline officers and ranks up to Inspector only)

9. What level of importance is placed on engagement with faith communities?
10. Are there differences in the level and type of engagement between faith groups?

- a. (if so) In your view, what are the reasons for those differences?
  - b. (if so) How could those differences be addressed?
- 11. What do you perceive the role of 'community engagement officer' to be?
  - a. How does this differ from police officer and police community support officer in local policing teams?
- 12. How would you describe police officer confidence in approaching issues related to faith?
  - a. In your view how does this level of confidence change depending on the specific faith?
  - b. How does this level of confidence change in relation to the rank or experience of officer?
- 13. How would you describe any changes in confidence levels over time (where able)?
  - a. (probe across different time periods, relate to specific regimes/strategies depending on officer length of service and role)
- 14. How clear are you about what is expected of you in relation to communicating and engaging with faith communities?
  - a. Can you describe what this expectation is?
  - b. Have you experienced a change in this expectation?
  - c. If so, has this change in expectation been clearly explained to you?
  - d. What was happening in the wider context that may have contributed to this change?
- 15. How do you manage the connection between police communication and engagement activity with faith communities and intelligence gathering or surveillance activity?
  - a. How clear is the distinction between these activities?
  - b. Can you describe any experience you have where these policing activities have overlapped?
  - c. How did you manage this?
  - d. How would you describe the outcomes of this activity?
  - e. What were the skills that you felt were most important to you in this situation?
  - f. How did you perceive your colleagues dealt with this?
- 16. How clear is the counter terrorism strategy in \*case study area\* Police?
  - a. Who is responsible for this?

- b. How clear do you feel about your role in this?
- 17. How could police communication and engagement with faith communities in this county be improved?
  - a. Where does the responsibility for this lie?

(Senior ranks only)

- 18. How clear do you think the strategy for engaging with faith communities currently is in \*case study area\*?
  - a. How has this strategy changed in recent years?
  - b. How have changes in strategy been communicated to staff?
  - c. How would you describe the 'ownership' of this strategy in recent years?
- 19. What is involved in the process of interpreting government strategy around faith community engagement and counter terrorism?
  - a. Who does this involve?
  - b. How distinct are the two strategies?
  - c. How distinct are the two areas of work?
  - d. How has the interpretation of government strategy been explained to officers and staff?
- 20. The Prevent strand of the government counter terrorism strategy placed very specific requirements on police engagement activity. Those requirements have changed over the last few years. How has the force responded to this?
- 21. What level of importance do you place on the \*case study area\* Police workforce equally representing the faiths in the county?
  - a. What do you perceive to be the benefits of this approach?
  - b. What do you perceive to be the challenges in this approach?
- 22. Are there any further comments you wish to make?

## Appendix Two

### Interview Schedule – Faith Community Leaders and Members

1. How well do you know your local police officers or police community support officers?
  - a. If known at all; how have those relationships developed over time?
  - b. If not at all; what do you think are the reasons for this?
2. How would you describe understanding of your faith amongst local police officers?
3. In this county, are you aware of any specific concerns within your faith community?
  - a. If so, what is common practice of sharing those concerns with the police?
4. In the event of needing to contact the police when it is not an emergency, how are you most likely to contact the police?
5. How do the police share information with you, about local incidents or requests for information?
  - a. And your broader community?
6. What methods are the most effective in sharing information with your community?
7. How do the police find out what is happening in your community?
  - a. In relation to your local policing needs or concerns?
  - b. Local events and opportunities and to engage with your community?
8. How accessible would you describe your local police officers?
  - a. What would you suggest to improve the accessibility of local police officers?
9. Can you describe an experience of communicating or dealing with a concern in the community that involved the police?
10. How aware are your local police officers of concerns in your community?
  - a. How have police officers responded or dealt with those concerns?
11. Can you describe a time when your faith, such as your practice, actions or needs in this respect have played a role in an experience with the police?
  - a. How would you describe the police response?
  - b. What action or behaviour was most important to you in the police response?
12. In your experience, have your local police officers demonstrated sufficient sensitivity to your faith?
  - a. If so, how did they demonstrate this?

- b. If not, what would you expect to see?
- 13. How important is your faith in your relationship with the local police?
  - a. Perhaps you could compare it to, for example, your neighbourhood, your specific crime concerns, your demographics such as your age, gender or where and how you travel around the local area?
- 14. Have you, or speaking on behalf of your community, experienced any incidents where you believe your faith played a role, for example differential treatment or feeling negative relationships with others?
  - a. If so, how did you respond to this?
  - b. What did you consider in your decision to report to the police or not?
  - c. If you did report to the police, how would you describe their response?
  - d. What was most important to you about the police response?
  - e. What caused you the most concern about the incident?
- 15. In your view, how would you describe the overall relationship between your faith community and the local police?
  - a. What are the reasons for this?
- 16. If you are able to reflect over a period of time in your community; has this relationship been any different in the past?
  - a. If so, how long ago?
  - b. What was different?
  - c. What led to the changes in this relationship?
  - d. How, if at all, has this affected the members of your community?
- 17. Are you aware of other faith communities in your local area?
  - a. If so, how do you perceive their relationships with the local police?
  - b. How would you describe any similarities or differences?
  - c. Are those similarities or differences, in your view, related to the faith of those communities or more broadly connected to geography, neighbourhoods, shared concerns about specific crime or disorder issues?
- 18. Thinking about the equality and fairness of police distribution of time and resources; how fair would you describe your local police team communication with your faith community?
  - a. With other faith communities?

- b. With any other groups, geographically, demographically?
19. Would you like to add any further comments to our discussion today?



## **Appendix Three**

### **Participant Information Sheet**

Researcher: Laura Knight, [lj16@le.ac.uk](mailto:lj16@le.ac.uk), 07557 775385

Research Supervisor: Dr Neil Chakraborti, [nac5@le.ac.uk](mailto:nac5@le.ac.uk), 0116 252 2200

#### **Research Study Title: Examining Police-Faith Relations**

You are being invited to take part in a research study. Before you decide to take part in the research, it is important that you understand why the research is being undertaken and what it will involve. If anything is unclear, or if you would like more information, please do not hesitate to contact us. Whilst this research is supported by a Bramshill Fellowship which means it is committed to producing outcomes which will be useful to policing in England and Wales, it is completely independent of the Police and the Police and Crime Commission.

#### **Aims of the Research**

This research will explore the relationship between the Police and the faith communities it serves, seeking to understand how relevant government policy has been interpreted by the police into frontline activity and how this is experienced by faith groups in everyday interactions.

The objectives of this research are to:

- Critically assess current policies and practices, nationally and locally, relating to police communication and engagement with faith communities, particularly under the trust and confidence and the counter-terrorism agendas
- Develop understanding of police perceptions of the aims, methods and outcomes of engagement with faith communities

- Develop understanding of faith community perceptions and experience of local police interaction and engagement
- Identify the implications of the political and social climate on both police and faith community perceptions and experience, exploring the wider ramifications on community cohesion

### **Research Methods**

If you choose to be included, you will be interviewed once, for 30 to 45 minutes, and will be asked a series of questions that are designed to enable you to talk about what you feel is important to this topic. The interview style will be relaxed and will move at your pace, and with your consent will be audio-recorded for the purpose of analysis. The information you provide will be strictly confidential, which means your name or contact details will not be shared with anyone beyond the researcher and research supervisor. Your comments may be quoted in the research report or publications, but it is the intention of the researcher to ensure those comments will remain anonymous and will therefore not be identifiable as yours. If this becomes difficult due to the information in the comment, such as an easily identified role or activity, these comments will be discussed with you and you will be given the opportunity to decide if, or how, they are presented.

### **Possible Risks or Inconveniences**

Arranging and undertaking the 30 to 45 minute interview with you will be the only activity you will be asked to undertake if you choose to participate in this research. This activity does not foresee any risks to you. Your involvement in the study is voluntary and you may withdraw your participation and any information that you have provided up to twelve weeks after your interview. The information you provide will be stored on a secure, encrypted laptop, accessible only by the researcher. 'Raw' data, the information collected in interviews will not be held by, or accessible to the Police or Police and Crime Commission. After the twelve week period from your interview, your data will have been coded and will not be identifiable to remove from the research.

Refusal to participate will not affect your relationship with the Police, Police and Crime Commission or the University of Leicester, now or in the future.

### **Benefits of the Research**

This research aims to better understand the relationship between the Police and some of the faith communities it serves, and to find out if there is a need to improve those relationships and how this could be achieved.

This means the findings of the research will be shared with local and national police leaders, Police and Crime Commissioners and with policing and criminal justice policy makers and Ministers, which includes representatives in Government, the Home Office and Ministry of Defence.

### **Ethics Review and Complaints**

If you are at all concerned about the way in which this research was conducted, you can contact the University of Leicester on the address at the top of the page, or directly to the supervisor of this project, Dr Neil Chakraborti, details above.

Thank you for your interest in this study.

## **Appendix Four**

### **Consent Form**

#### **Project Outline**

This research will explore the relationship between the Police and the faith communities it serves, seeking to understand how relevant government policy has been interpreted by the police into frontline activity and how this is experienced by faith groups in everyday interactions.

#### **Your Participation**

You will be asked some questions about your views and experiences of engagement with faith communities. If there are any questions you would rather not answer then please say so and we will stop the interview or move on to the next question, whichever you prefer.

Data from this project may be published but it will not be linked to any specific participant as all interviewees taking part in this project will have their identity anonymised.

By signing this form the signatory agrees to take part in the interview or focus group and allows their responses to be analysed and used in the research.

#### **Your Consent**

In giving my consent I confirm that I have read and understood the project information sheet and have been given the opportunity to discuss the information and my involvement in the project with the researcher.

I understand that my involvement in the study is voluntary and that I can withdraw from the study at any time, without affecting my relationship with the researchers, the Police or Police and Crime Commissioner, or the University of Leicester now or in the future. If at

any time if I do not wish to continue with the interview, the audio recording will be erased and the information provided will not be included in the study.

I also understand that my personal details such as phone number and address will not be revealed to people outside the project.

Signed:

Name:

Date:

Researcher contact details: Laura Knight, [laura.knight@northampton.ac.uk](mailto:laura.knight@northampton.ac.uk), 07850260029

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